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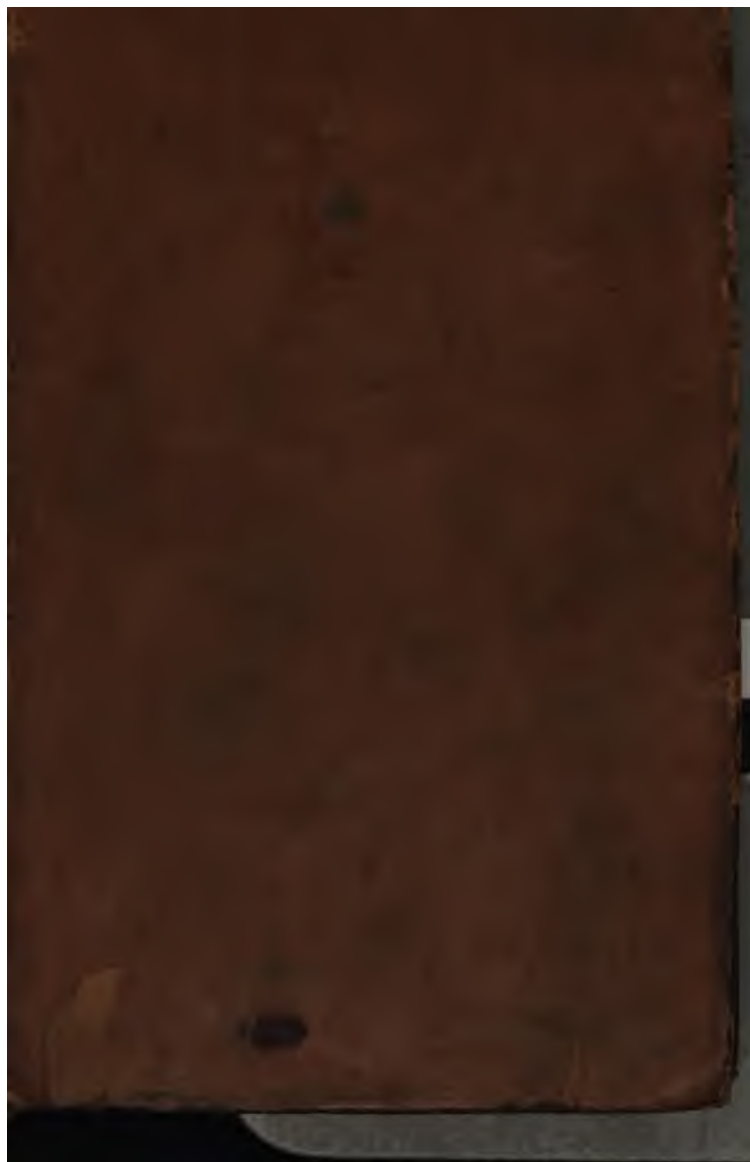
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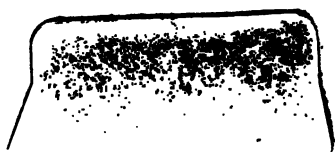
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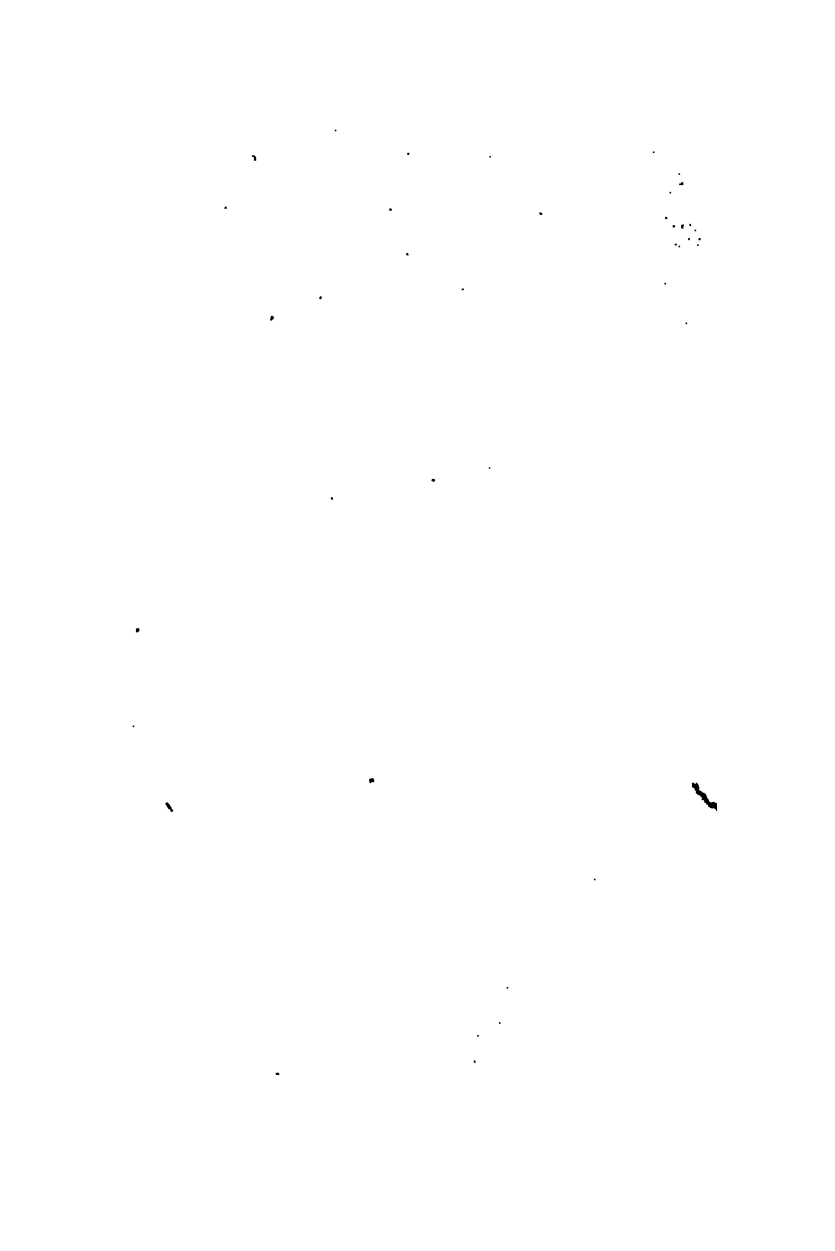
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T H E  
H I S T O R Y  

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O F

Mifs PITTBOROUGH.

In a SERIES of LETTERS.

By a L A D Y.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

V O L. I.

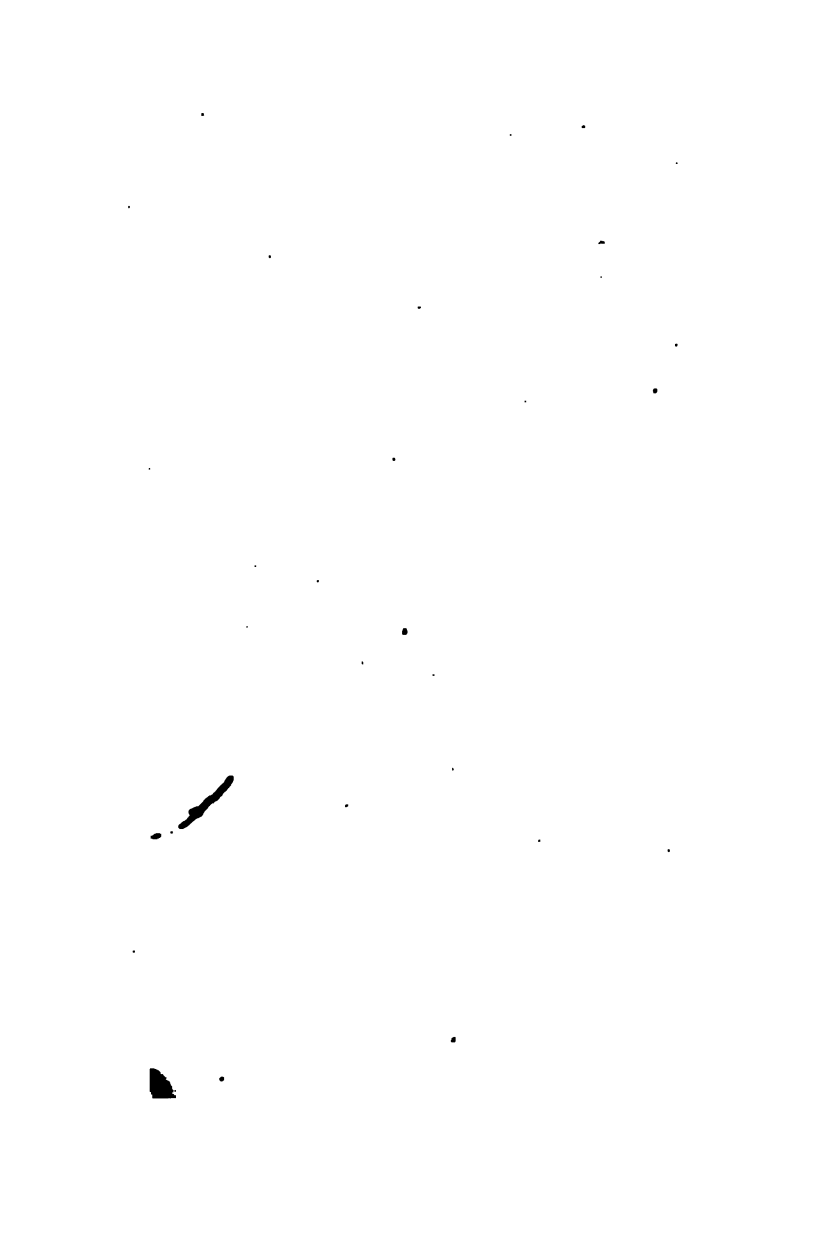
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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
MISS PITTBOROUGH.



LETTER I.

MISS PITTBOROUGH to MISS NANCY  
PITTBOROUGH.



HY, my Nancy, do you alone delay your congratulations on my entrance into a new untried world ; especially as it is such a world, my dear, if we may trust report, as is most aptly calculated to give your friend the highest delight. I confess, indeed,

VOL. I.

B

12



## 2      The HISTORY of

I am at present a stranger to all those gay flattering scenes my foolish heart has so long panted after. But is not the hour of my introduction at hand? I have pre-determined to remit you whole volumes in their praise, provided they answer my high-raised expectations.

I will acknowledge to you, that the town in itself is far from making the most agreeable appearance, unless one was capable of admiring things for being merely preposterous : the height of the houses, the dirt of the streets, and extent of the buildings, severally coming under that denomination.

But, giddy creature that I am, why do I thus suffer my vivacity to transport me beyond myself? and neglect telling you in its due, consequently the first place, what unspeakable regret I feel at being separated at so unmerciful a distance from my beloved sister and most engaging companion : yet why may not sober truths be

ex-

### MISS PITTBOROUGH. 3

expressed in lively language ? — gravity is by no means a proof of sincerity ; for we are taught by every day's experience, that hypocrisy bears no peculiar characteristic.

Never did honest dame Nature produce greater contrasts than you and I : light and shade, earth and air, are but weak emblems : — we have our opposite views, our opposite arts of pleasing, our opposite dispositioned admirers. Yet notwithstanding all these opposite articles, including at the same time our tastes and inclinations, we are most indissolubly attached to each other by affection's tie, infinitely stronger than that twig consanguinity.

By the way, it appears to me, from the little observation I have hitherto been capable of making with respect to the conduct and conversation of our numerous visitants, that the nearest and dearest relationships are considered as a mere farce in this polite part of the globe.

You may hear one woman traduce another, with all the virulence, to use a masculine phrase, of her sex. — A man (with such rancour as no expressions can give you an idea of) shall professedly prosecute and persecute his congenial mortal; yet should you enquire into the merits of either the male or female cause, or the parties connexions, twenty to one but you found the provocation a trifle, and the traduced and prosecuted wretch, the father, brother, sister, or mother of the traducer and prosecutor: who, upon such an occasion (a stranger in particular), could forbear crying out, oh! oh! these are persons among whom I must be greatly upon my guard; for if they are capable of treating their own flesh and blood so mercilessly, what have not I to apprehend?

But, presumptuous prating girl, how dare you presume to censure and lash mankind? you who are, at this juncture,  
as

as it were, merely dropped from the clouds, unknowing, as unknown, talk of degeneracy: — look to yourself; your passions are strong, your reason as yet in its cradle; how do you expect to stem the great torrent with security? — blinded by self-love, misled by self-wisdom (and naturally fond of every species of gaiety) — take care we may not add — undone by self-confidence: pertness, vanity, and youth, are dangerous companions, not to mention — Nay, Nancy, none of your severity; surely in the second person one might have said a civil thing: — but your over-squeamishness has thrown me out of my train.

I am, most certainly, at present surrounded with bewitching snares; a splendid habitation, numerous retinue, with every other elegance the ambitious sigh for, are provided for my accommodation: my neat rural habiliments are to be ex-

## 6 The HISTORY of

changed for all the luxury of fashion and expensive adornments.

Methinks it is pity though to renounce the little prim air I was wont to assume. — Six thousand pounds would, indeed, have enabled as well as authorized me to flutter before this late period, had not our prudent mother (perceiving the wild bent, I presume, of her younger daughter's inclination) intended our quaker-like appearance for a curb-bridle : — but here am I a living proof how little internals are affected by externals. Had she been continued to us, I should not even now have been permitted to launch at large ; and yet you cannot deny but I have the experience of full eighteen winters to boast of. — How unaccountable her aversion to public life ! how happily correspondent her spouse's inclination : — by mutual consent the good souls buried themselves in gloom and solitude, from the second year of their union, when

when life was in its gayest prime, except, indeed, a grand annual excursion to our neighbouring city ; from whence, as I have been informed, they constantly returned rather disgusted than amused. — Is it possible, Nancy, that I derived my origin from such a pair ?

My trades-people have just brought home my gay trappings, and most enchantingly elegant they are. — How impatiently shall I wait the arrival of that stated period for being drawn forth. — Great bodies, my demure sister, you will please to observe, most invariably move by rule ; little ones, perhaps, by *reason*.

You remember De la Fontaine's shepherd. — I shall only reverse the scene. He, upon receiving disgust at court, most pathetically welcomes his rustic garb, that had been exchanged by his prince for a pompous robe : but it is my intention to

## 8. The HISTORY of

cast off the simple country lads with suitable feelings.

Adieu (my eyes languishing in unison with my expressions) ye humble long-accustomed garments! my round-eared caps, &c, &c. oh! adieu! — Adieu the pleasures I was wont to taste unruffled as unruffling! — Adieu much valued spot of my nativity and childish sports! — Adieu that soft, that rustic-like repose, derived from sober hours! — But above all, adieu, a thousand times adieu, my dear, dear Nancy! I am compelled to yield myself a captive to unweildy affluence, and disgusting ceremony?

What will, alas! become of my poor head, or poorer heart, in this wilderness of folly, I am unable to conjecture — except with regard to the article of affection for you; where, and where only, it will ever remain immutable.

L E T.



L E T T E R II,

From the same, to the same.

**W**HAT would I not give that you could now behold me. I am fruzed and furbelowed up to my very ears, My neck, I blush to acknowledge it, is displayed with the same unconcern with which you would shew your naked face :—I don't above half like it ; but you know the fashion-mongers, not I, am to blame,

And where do you think I am going, butterfly-like, to unfold my gaudy wings—but to the play.—The old house is first complimented with my appearance — in compliment you must understand though,



to my own judgment; for where else could I find a Garrick?

My expectations are at their last gasp—  
I die with impatience: the party is such  
— but I cannot describe them until my  
return. — I am now summoned, adieu!  
adieu!

Eleven o'clock.



O Nancy! you must allow me, from  
my present exaltation, to look contempt  
on little folks below: — my spirits are all  
delightful hurry and pleasing perturbation.  
— What were Cæsar's conquests to  
mine; — the handsomest, finest, bravest  
fellow? — Could I but have been certain  
my tears searched his heart, and he really  
appeared disturbed, I would have exhausted  
them all; provided they could have  
contributed to fix, not wash away, my  
remembrance.

## MISS PITTBOROUGH. 11

Well, but the particulars? Poor soul, what odd notions do you entertain! — To be sure I can be as composed and collected as yourself, who love and hate, and sing, and chat, with the same equal heavy feelings.

You was once, by accident, present at a review: what people make so striking, so pleasing an appearance as your officers; the colour of their cloaths, the power of the sun upon their complexions, the big looking cockade, and protecting promise, their every feature communicates, is irresistible.

We females are said to be weak and cowardly; no wonder then that we are instinctively attached to an open countenanced commander.

Observe the operations of nature in every other created species: — the brutes consider caves as their assylum, consequently

quently repair to them upon every suspicion of danger ; the birds from conscious security sing sweetest in the desarts ; and the fishes warily quit the friendly sheltering banks.

The merchant and mechanic we behold with approbation and gratitude, as they contribute to our ease, convenience, and emolument. — The lawyer, with a mixture of apprehension and confidence, as he can both preserve and deprive us of our property. — The physician has our beseeching, yet impatient eye ; we have faith in his prescriptions, but would find their good effects instantaneous. — The clergy (good ones I mean) inspire us with reverential awe, as we cannot but consider them as a prelude to the last great scene of mortality.

But with the soldier it is widely different ; the loves and graces all wanton in his train, health and vivacity sparkle in his eye,

eye, and the laurel wreath that binds his brow, at once bespeaks both past and future protection.

Well, but the play? How could you ask so *mal a propos* a question; — and must then a real give place to a fictitious hero; — be it so. — But, oh! you have scared from my imagination some of the brightest ideas that ever yet presented themselves. Now I am reduced to your level, pray observe the change — the play, why, ah! it was a good one; for Shakespear was the author.

Of all the bubbles mankind are exposed to, none can exceed that bubble, education. A blockhead, if he has the misfortune to be born a lord, for example; (*scandalum magnatum*, out of the question; for I believe no one will prove so hardy as to deny but lords may be blockheads now and then), how unmercifully is he doomed to be flogged from one class to another, in  
order

order to render him a member of the literati.—Alas ! how ineffectual.

A house-maid (it is a rude kind of simile, but some of Mr. Bayes's will keep it in countenance), when she lights her fire, if, with more frugality than prudence, she has hastily extinguished the assisting tallow taper, and perceives but here and there a feeble spark ; puffs, puffs with a light cautious hand, conscious how fatal even one rough blast would prove : but when she finds the blaze has kindly communicated itself around, and that not only the lesser but greater combustibles yield to its genial power ; she sings, or William's Ghost, or Chevy-Chace ; and blows it soon into a flame.

The foundation must be, in nature — clay will not burn ; and what water could have quenched our Shakespeare's fire ? — It is ours to cultivate with judgment ; but that Being that spoke us what  
we

we are, alone can plant : — but I am terrified at my own wisdom ; these sentiments flow with so ill a grace from my pen, that I cannot bear to behold them : — yet, ere I resume my proper self, I must give you one piece of information, that I am convinced will appear no less astonishing in your sight than it did in mine. — It is too true, my dear sister, tender sensibility is utterly exploded amongst persons of fashion. — Plebeians alone are allowed to feel ; and I could perceive that my breeding was held in the highest contempt by the polite circle I was cast in ; merely for my betraying some symptoms of humanity at the strong painted scenes of horror that were introduced to my view. Nay, so powerful was the genuine dictates of my uncorrected nature, that I was frequently lost to my companions, myself, and all the world, until I had the mortification of being awakened from the pleasing delusion by bursts of laughter, frivolous chat, or undue admiration of the quick darting

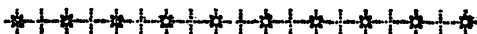
darting eye, or agreeable voice of the performer : — and not as I had flattered myself by useful observations, or judicious reflections upon the justice he was doing the author's meaning, or the operations of a no less well-regulated than well-dissembled passion.

It was well for me that my heart was not equally exposed to view with my too refractory eyes ; — I had been undone for a fine lady, maugre all my efforts : — for I know not why it was ; but a pleasing kind of melancholy prevailed over even vanity itself, and involuntarily led me to draw a parallel between human transactions, and the fiction that then engaged my attention. — O life ! what art thou (whispered a mental something I was till that time utterly unacquainted with) but one continued succession of false representations : — we sweat, and fret, and labour, to support some character that strikes our fancy, or with or contrary to our natural bent — no matter

matter which, provided we can hobble on without the public ear being too palpably grated by our noisy prompter. — But enough of such sentiments. — It is your conversation, and papa's instructive lectures, that thus disqualify me for the life I love. — I will immediately unlearn all that you and that good gentleman have taught; and, with an airy head and callous heart, take the lead at each belle assembly. — But it is a vain attempt. — I have wrote myself into the horrors, spleen, &c. &c. and cannot shake them off. — I will therefore wish you a soft repose, and no less pleasant dreams than I hope to experience.

That ever a red-coat should be capable of making such havock and devastation in a woman's heart !





## L E T T E R    I I I .

Colonel DINGLEY to Mr. BROOKSBANK.

**I** Have news for you, Ned, that will greatly surprize you ; and procure you a laugh, though at your friend's expence. I acknowledge the justice of your mirth ; I anticipate your raillery ; and, notwithstanding the aukward figure I am sensible a man makes when he betrays his own infirmities, I will for once be beforehand with a busy tattling world, and inform you — of what it would be impossible to conceal.

I hope you will, however, believe that it was no common means that could subdue my boasted indifference. — No, I have a thousand times convinced you that I was  
proof

proof against the blaze of beauty, the glare of wit, and the most striking graces of personal accomplishments. — It was, indeed, a charm superior to all these that insensibly spread its influence over my heart; nor had I the least intimation of the business, until it was perfectly accomplished.

Oh! Why will that lovely sex labour to render themselves unamiable? — Why the studied step, the artful smile, the superfluity of ornaments? when they only undo the most finished work of nature, and substitute a blemish for perfection.

Some hours leisure, and the appearance of Garrick in the character of Richard, induced me to engage a solitary place in the side-box, that I might indulge myself, free from all that impertinent interruption a party is too liable to produce.

As my servant had received due orders for his conduct, I drank my coffee with

great deliberation, and only reached the house a few minutes before the performance began.

On entering the box, I was a little disconcerted to find that my indolence had occasioned my servant's mixing with an elegant set of company, whose conversation would have been highly grateful to me; amongst the number of which was Mrs. Hutchens, and a young lady, whose face I was well convinced had never before made a public appearance.

From a piece of good breeding, that did violence to my inclination, I would have declined taking the place my servant had provided; it was in the front row; — and there were several ladies to demand their preference: — but by a then pleasing obstinacy, the dear creatures are too apt to affect on many unpleasing occasions, I found myself compelled to accept it; and in the same instant was sensible of the  
hap-

MISS PITTBOROUGH. 21

happinefs it procured me, by placing me next the lovely ft ranger.

Never did I behold fo intelligent a countenance; her eyes, her mouth, her every feature, conveyed — but I will not attempt to defcribe the innocence, the benevolence, that evidently appeared in her whole compofition. — You muft fee her, and judge for yourfelf. — However, as there is danger in the encounter, I will not haftily expofe you to it.

I was no lefs aftonifhed at the polite eafe with which my fair companion received my firft compliment, than ft ruck by her perfon, and as we foon entered into general chat, I had an opportunity of remarking, that her obfervations had the beauty of propriety and originality; her queftions the force of judgment, and her language the utmoft refinement.

What have courts or courtiers to boast, when a remote village (for such was the place of this lady's nativity and education) can afford so compleat a character.

My acquaintance with the aunt was undoubtedly a *pas pour tout* with the blooming niece, whose amiable unreserve, artless vivacity, and modest confidence, charmed and entertained me beyond what I am able to express.

With what delight did I observe the genuine operation of that variety of passions the performance naturally excited in her breast, unwarped by prejudice, and uncontaminated by affectation.

Now her lovely bosom was agitated with horror; and now her tenderness was evinced by a falling tear—now disgust was alone predominant—and now astonishment, for a moment, held even feeling in suspense:

suspence: — the villainies, the artifices of Richard, occasioned many beautiful changes in her aspect. — Lady Anne's weakness and credulity had her highest disapprobation. — She even condemned the author for drawing so unnatural a character; and humorously insisted upon it, "that no age could have furnished him "with an original!" — But when that pathetic scene was exhibited, where the wretched queen is torn from her helpless, her beloved children; the soft sorrow of her heart became irrestrainable: in short, — she in that instant compleated her conquest; and your friend yielded himself a willing captive.

You will, perhaps, conclude that I mean to improve my acquaintance with this paragon: — you are a sly fellow, and seldom mistaken in your conjectures. — Yes, I acknowledge I am all impatience to recommend myself to her favour; for such loveliness will be beset, wheresoever it

appears; and too probably, Ned, the least delay might throw me for ever at a distance, whilst some happier confident being bore away the prize.

It is a queer sort of an affair though—to have one's head and heart thus turned topsy turvy.—I that was wont with Benedict to behold one lady fair—yet find myself well, &c. &c.—that could find charms in retirement and self-contemplation—to be so miserably reduced to the whiners' class, as not to be capable of one idea, abstracted from the beloved object that has so lately possessed my tenderest sentiments.

Farewell, honest Ned! I unbespeak not your gay condolance; be what you please, say what you please; our long accustomed friendship is your sanction; and my unabated esteem, a never-failing security against every species of displeasure.

LET-



L E T T E R IV.

MISS NANCY PITTBOROUGH to MISS  
PITTBOROUGH.

I With, my dear sister, that like the travelled pidgeon, you may not soon repent quitting your peaceful happy home: dangers, disasters, innumerable await you; and many school-boys, perhaps, already suspend a fatal sling to wound, at least, your repose.

With what unspeakable rapture shall I receive you once more into our innocent retreat, if you should be so fortunate as to escape the evils that threaten you.

That ever vivacity should render any one unamiable: — but yours, like the beauty of a rose, is not without the hidden thorn.

Your



Your first letter is a too just emblem of your heart, warm, inconstant, vain. — How do you neglect the purpose of your being, and abuse one of the best of understandings ! and with endowments that would enable you to shine, on every benevolent, every rational occasion, aim at no higher excellence, than the taudry trim that fashion can bestow.

You, my dear, are an incontestible instance that vanity is far from being the product of any particular soil : had you been bred in the gay metropolis from your earliest infancy, you could not have been a more finished coquet ; nor would your simple misjudging heart have felt a stronger flutter at a beau.

And shall it be said that my sister, whose education has been most unexceptionably delicate and prudent — who has not only received the clearest definition of propriety and decorum, but has been carefully

fully instructed in every religious duty :— shall it be said, that she, taken by the eye and the ear, fancy, idle degenerate fancy, her supreme judge and monitor — suffered her inclinations to be enslaved by the empty charms of the martial strut, and martial habiliments !

I shall never forgive myself for promoting this journey, if an improper connexion should be the consequence : but it has ever been my weakness to give you, at all times, and upon all occasions, the preference. I, in many degrees your superior, in the article of gravity at least, should have been in no danger from such an excursion ; as I should have played a timorous, cautious, and consequently sure card : for I am convinced there are more young women undone by self-confidence and credulity, than by any real propensity to error.

Excuse

Excuse me, but this is not the only circumstance I lament : — and can you, who have ever piqued yourself upon your spirit and resolution, tamely submit to be fashion-led ; even beyond what is consistent either with decency, or your own private taste ? Is it not a severe reflection upon your boasted firmness, to want courage to go hand in hand with propriety ? at the same time that your attempt to exculpate yourself, by charging the whole blame upon the fashion-mongers (as you gayly stile the original inventors), justly exposes you to the imputation of meanness. They indeed spread the snare ; but they cannot force or surprise you into it ; as they have no power over your judgment, or inclination. They cannot render folly other than folly ; and though the general practice may familiarize it, in some degree, and lessen what is preposterous, its unsuitableness and pernicious tendency will ever remain.

Your

## MISS PITTBOROUGH.

Your person, whatever estimation you may set upon it, will, I fear, prove your greatest misfortune : — it is impossible to behold it with indifference : — the bloom of health and peace that glows upon your cheek — the agreeable vivacity that sparkles in your eye — with the arch smile, occasioned by a rather becoming dimple, that plays about your not ill-shaped mouth, must procure your vanity a perpetual feast. But, my dear sister, sit loose I beseech you to every flattering insinuation. — It is innocence and good humour that enlightens your countenance ; deprive yourself of them, and even your plain-faced sister may pretend to vie with you. However weak the confession, I myself have frequently been delighted to trace the gaiety of your heart in every speaking feature ; and when I thought it my duty to chide you for some little impropriety in your sentiments, or expressions, those lines of Mr. Pope have officiously suggested themselves ;

If,

## The HISTORY of

If to her share some female errors fall,  
Look on her face, and you'll forget them all

notwithstanding they have been so vilely prostituted, at a vicious shrine. But, my dear, though, in the over-flowings of my affection, I could thus excuse follies that I considered as having no other source than youth, and a cheerful unrestrained imagination, I should not have the least charity for practical error; — but I have hope that, like the coward, your big words proceeded merely from conscious security.

Under the paternal roof, and at a happy distance from the men, how have you blundered: — you was for leading all in chains; and, like Congreve's Melamont making lovers when you pleased, letting them live as long as you pleased; and when you was so weary of them as to suffer them to die, in order to please yourself, making more. But remember, man is not a creature to be played with, mee  
an

and harmless though he may appear : can the lamb escape the lion's paw unhurt ? — their natures are callous, impatient of controul, enterprising, revengeful : — they have design in every action, their expressions are the result of premeditation ; and all connexion with them is as dangerous as the eye of the basilisk.

Admiration is a tribute we involuntarily pay to beauty : — gratitude is a noble sentiment ; but as it is ever attended with a sense of obligation, is sometimes painful : — but esteem is a lively, yet deliberate, approbation ; has its foundation in good opinion, is increased by observation, and confirmed by every newly discovered perfection ; it is the only sensation we mortals are capable of feeling justly, as it is free from all the prejudice and violence of passion, the heat of ambition, the narrow hopes and fears of self-love, and the sordid anxiety of self-interest. Be it your business, your glory, to cultivate  
friend-

friendship upon this basis only, as it is the only one that can promise permanence; for the attachment of a day, give it what name you please, is neither more nor less than idle caprice.

You are now just entering into life; and have it as yet in your power to establish that kind of reputation that appears most eligible in your sight; but it is a work that must be ever effecting, from the impossibility of its ever being wholly accomplished; one neglect, one drowsy interval, may unravel the labour of years; and though, like Syfiphus, you may by indefatigable industry get the stone once to the top, yet will it roll back with the utmost impetuosity, unless you are perpetually upon your guard.

I tremble for your future fate; your open, unreserved, volatile disposition, will expose you to a thousand inconveniences from both sexes; those who are practised  
in

in deceit, will be apt to consider even the amiable dictates of your heart as proceeding from the same unworthy source; and the quickness of your sensibility by exciting warm attachments and warm resentments, will be ever producing you unavailing repentance and mortification.

Can you, for the sake of our past friendship, have patience to read this long lecture, that has no other end in view than your happiness and advantage? And, with all humility, would caution you at this critical juncture (as your good genius) to beware.





LETTER V.

Miss PITTBOROUGH to Miss NANCY  
PITTBOROUGH.

**B**LESS me! what a frightful picture have you drawn of the dear world, and dearer worldlings. How prettily we can prattle about we know not what, mere bugbears of the imagination: that envy, hatred, and malice, those characteristics of ancient virginity, should ever find a place in your heart. "The men callous, impatient, enterprizing, revengeful:" — I must laugh in your honest face. Why, I tell you, they are the softest, simpering, frisking dears, that ever nature produced: so tame, that you meet them carried about in their leathern conveniences, with powdered heads, solitaird  
bosoms,

bosoms, and hands of a similar complexion with the driven snow, gently crossed, supporting their hats, in the most dove-like position. What a sweet effeminate situation, cooped up according to their old grandmother's maxims for longevity to preserve their heads and feet from the inclemency of the weather.

The colonel calls it ridiculous, a disgrace to the masculine character; — but I say no: it is for the emolument of the women, as it prevents all that terror and apprehension we country girls especially, were wont to feel at the sight of a male mortal: but surely, I add upon these occasions, times must be greatly changed, or my mama would never have cautioned me to be so much upon my guard, with respect to such a species.

The colonel lives with us, I think; appears perfectly at my devotion; and, shall I confess it, in spite of all your wise, sober

admonitions, I am half tempted to cut flourish or too, only to put his profession to the test.

Do not look so grave upon the occasion; I will neither play the fool, nor the mad-woman;—but who can resist the natural curiosity of finding out a man's heart in common cases, I grant you, impossibilities are no eligible attempt; but here you must excuse me, indeed you must.—

But how can you? Why there again. How often must I repeat, that it is not in the nature of things to be able to judge of inclinations we have never felt:—so no more of that, my good sage sister.

The colonel is the youngest of general Dingley's sons; he is possessed of a fine fortune bestowed upon him when a boy, by a distant relation, whose namesake he happened to be.—His age is a very pretty suitable age for a damsel of eighteen, as I apprehend

send him to be upon the verge of five or six and twenty. Shall I give you his picture, without the least extenuation, or *sitting down ought in malice*. — I have not considered him sufficiently; but take him piece-meal, and judge for yourself.

He is a good size, neither too tall, too short, too fat, or too lean; — his complexion florid — his eyes penetrating — his mouth pleasing, and his teeth but one degree inferior to your own: add to which, an insinuating manner, a manly address, a well cadenced voice, and a happy flow of expression; and you have the whole mortal at once compleat.

You will, perhaps, conclude from the particulars I have now presented you with, that I have not been over-sparing in my observations: — but take my advice, Nancy, never give your opinion of effects without being acquainted with the cause.

Be it known to you then, that as he is exactly one of your beauties, neither Drawcanfir, nor a petite maître, from sympathy of sentiment (though not very common with us, as you in general possess the queerest set of thoughts imaginable) have been induced to bestow no inconsiderable share of attention upon this gentleman ; — that is, I have regarded him as an object perfectly calculated to please the taste of one I have the highest affection for ; and in short — but, perhaps, am not quite so clear upon the subject as you could wish ; and rather puzzle than explain my meaning : we will, therefore take the man up where we set him down.

You by this time conceive yourself to be a pretty good judge of his composition — read the paragraph relative to him once again — you have — and find no defects, no exceptions. — Why, child ! I have not yet mentioned his mind ; and there, and there only,

only, I will require you to allow him defective.

But his faults are of such a nature, that I know not how to communicate them.— He has, he has, upon my honour it is so simple, that if I was not apprehensive of deceiving you into too good an opinion of him, I would never mention it: — but he has such far-fetched notions of delicacy, decorum, and such-like stuff, that, according to his account of it, a sister or wife of his would have but an ill time of it, if in all their words and actions they were not as arrant prudes as a certain relation of mine down in Gloucestershire.

I have heard him say, in mixed companies, assuming at the same time a most consequential air, that a woman ought not to be surprized, if she suffers her conduct to be light, at being held in light estimation; we can only judge from appearances; and when indiscretion and le-

vity glare in the conduct, it is uncommonly charitable to conclude, that the heart has no share in them: — that nothing fixes or destroys the reputation of our sex so much as a judicious, or injudicious choice of our companions; what is a voluntary act, bespeaks our natural sentiments; and if we can suffer ourselves to be amused with idle, giddy, and too frequently licentious chat, we shall find it difficult to persuade our graver friends, that our tastes and judgments are in reality much more refined; but that we cannot help playing the fool now and then.

He further says (I almost hate the formal odd creature) that women ought to be perpetually upon their guard, not only with respect to their conduct, but their very looks; we are often most observed when we are least sensible of it; he has known ladies sink into contempt with their greatest admirers, by only an approving sparkle of the eye, at either an improper  
song,

song, a well-drawn, though unworthy, character in a play, or the accidental approach of a notorious, though handsome, rake ; — there is no reconciling contradictions ; — it is dangerous to refine too much : — and if we cannot find aught to approve, we have nothing for it, but absolutely to disapprove ; we lose ourselves when we suffer real good, and what appears barely suspicious, to balance one moment : — but I am sick of such odious antiquated notions. — How came I to have the patience to give you such a catalogue ?

I do suppose all these wise sentiments are dropped for my benefit, in order to decoy me into a little nasty, narrow track, called prudence, where are innumerable brambles and thistles from its being, so generally unfrequented. — No, if I live I will trip another way ; and if he bears me all that good-will I have reason to suspect, his wisdom shall hobble, amble, or make



make a trip of it, if he is able ; but positively he shall come after me. — I would beckon—he would run ; and so, my dear, it would be ten to one, but if, as your experienced ones say, there is a precipice at the extremity of this flowery path, but his honour might tip over in catching at your friend — whilst she, by an agile and unexpected turn, avoided both him and the declivity.

And would you be so ungenerous as to let him dash himself to pieces? — How could I help it, you know — if he was so weak as to suffer love to put out the eyes of circumspection, what should I have to answer for? — If I lead, is it of necessity he should follow? There is a proverb, indeed, for those who are driven ; but nothing upon earth can excuse a voluntary pursuit.

But charity, humanity — stupid ! Who knows any thing of them in this polite age?

age? — His person, indeed, might excite one's compassion, because it happens to be a very decent hero-like person; — and one might be unwilling to lose it, for fear one should not be able to meet with such another: — thus you see self-love is a most excellent principle: — and I think, upon reflection, instead of the method I proposed, I will have a cord to draw him on occasionally; should he make the least resistance, it is but throwing it from one; but otherwise, if he capered on like the fore-horse of a team, tossing his head, and disregarding his steps, it would be kind to convince him of his folly, by letting him down some little way, at least, and then saluting with — I hope, sir, you will find this a useful lesson.

But I am certainly infatuated to be thus furnishing an enemy with weapons against myself; I will, therefore, intreat you to believe, that even the giddiest heart is capable of one steady sentiment; or that  
mine

44      The HISTORY of

mine is an exception to the general rule; for sincerely I love you with undiminished affection, notwithstanding all my flights and fancies.



LETTER VI.

From the same, to the same.

**O**H! here we have him again: the colonel is at breakfast with us, my dear:—he eats but little; looks up, down, around, with an uncommon vacuity of aspect. — Hands me my tea — psha, how the cup and saucer chatters! I fancy, notwithstanding all his pretensions to sobriety, he was last night engaged in some irregularity.

You'll pardon me, sir, the post!—How silly, how soft, how pleasing his countenance! on my word I suspect he is hatching  
ing

## MISS PITTBOROUGH. 45

ing some important matter—a love declaration perhaps—but I am prepared;—nor shall he ever discover my real sentiments of him. Rack, torture, twist, turn, I shall be proof against all his wiles:—for to give up one's sentiments, is to give up one's power; and, as you quoted Mrs. Melamont upon me on a former occasion, I will tell you that I think, in her words, that when one has parted with one's power—one instantly becomes old and ugly.

But after all, my dear, is not hope and fear, judiciously varied, the richest food for a lover? a little cold water now and then to dilute the one—the cordial of a few kind words to mitigate the other, would have both a happy and useful effect.

What an agreeable employment—to suit the subsistence to the appetite—to observe the beginnings, unfoldings, and maturings of each separate passion—to see  
them

them now expand, and now recoil, according to the encouragement they received.

But how is this? — I am alone with this formidable, this bewitching looking fellow ; and he does so intreat and intreat me to listen to a few soft things—that for his sake, for curiosity's sake, for vanity's sake, and, if I was weak enough to add, for love's sake, I fear I should not do myself injustice ; I am above half inclined to oblige him.



Eleven o'clock p. m.

Well, all is over ; and we are the loves and the doves, and all that : — what, he knelt, he swore, he adored ! upon my honour you are mistaken.

He only told you, in plain terms, I loved ! Well, simplicity is ever a mark of sincerity.

Real

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Really, Nancy, you make one look very foolish : — what then would the man be at ? I'll tell you — he said that of all the women he had ever met with, I was the most agreeable to him.

So cold ! aye, so chilling cold : — that my person, fine though he acknowledged it, had but in a small degree contributed to engage his attachment. Don't you admire his sagacity in attaching himself to what he will never be able to comprehend or obtain the least acquaintance with : but the beauty of all is, that this inside of mine, notwithstanding the charms he is pleased to impute to it, has its imperfections : — my vivacity (that is the rank weed that must be eradicated) — what an amazing circumstance ! — both delights and torments him : pray observe, it is a dangerous weapon in inexperienced hands.

I thank him for that ; not quite so inexperienced as he may imagine ; of which

which I possibly hereafter may favour him with a proof.

That many would put a construction upon it (a weighty argument, indeed, and urged with judgment) that my innocence (the sugar-plumb) could have no conception of ; and that if I would pardon him, (the wretch) he would presume to tell me, it had already been more than once most vilely misconstrued.

Wicked insinuation — malicious action ! was the daring monster of his own hopeful species, he surely made him eat his words ; but I shall forbear all enquiry, & avoid obligation.

That he feared he was paying but i' court (a gleam of common sense) to young lady's heart, by speaking b truths (sufficiently bold, Mr. Colonel must confess) : but that his opinion of understanding was such (how irresist

that he was convinced he had no displeasure to apprehend.

Artful intimation ! calculated to deprive one's just resentment of every grace.

That it would be his pride, his highest satisfaction, to be permitted to have an interest in my reputation (a pretty fool indeed he would make of me) ; and to be indulged with communicating his experience in life, with all due deference (another sweetener) to my judgment, for my benefit (a prodigious gainer I should find myself without doubt) — that a false step was much sooner taken than retrieved (a second Solomon) ; and that, in proportion as I excelled my sex in perfections (absolute daub), I should find the difficulty in obtaining their charitable consideration.

How I despise both him and them for their narrow mindedness.

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E

That



That his fortune and connexions my friends were no strangers to.

A happy circumstance truly ! though, by the way, I must acknowledge a coach-and-six is no contemptible acquisition.

And that, if I would condescend to approve the latter, the former should be left entirely to their disposition.

A compliment, to the wisdom of some folks, goes a great way : — but mercy on us, how I was terrified at even this distant attempt to ensnare my liberty ! and I seemed tumbling into the tremendous state of matrimony all at once.

That my friendship (good luck !) was all he at present meant to solicit (a mirable humility !) except (the rogue pop in his saving clause so unexpected upon one) I would vouchsafe to honour him with the splendid distinction  
pu

## MISS PITTBOROUGH. 51.

public, of being my most favoured attendant. Alias, a spy upon my every action.

That I should never find him presuming upon indulgence (oh, the sycophant!)—he did not want to fasten himself upon me, but to follow me like my shadow. A most handsome reflection of a fine lady:—and so, I think, ended this musty declaration—perhaps I may not have given it exactly in his own words—some little variation or so, as a foil for my comments; but, upon the whole, it is a strong likeness.

Are not you forfeited to death?—well then might I:—I had nothing for it, but to yawn at proper intervals—to lift up my eyes in profound admiration—to pout—but here and there a not ill-sounding expression; and the prospect of the coach-and-six, already mentioned, insensibly dispelled all displeasure from my brow.—I, indeed, have some reason to fear I made

but a very awkward figure upon the occasion.

The mistaken colonel, looking upon my silence, and silly confusion (according to the old hearty English custom); as a mark of consent, had the temerity to seize my hand, kissed it with suitable ardour, and talking himself perfectly out of breath, of joy, happiness, transport: I began to think I had a fair opportunity of revenging myself for all I had suffered; — therefore, affecting the utmost anxiety and apprehension, — pray, sir, cried I, take care how you come down, they are really very ugly steep steps.

Madam! returned he, with the wildest stare: — I was half frightened; but had sufficient courage to reply, in the same assumed accent, — I mean, sir, that it was a very difficult descent from the eminence to which but a few moments ago you was exalted; but I congratulate your escape.

O na-

O nature ! what necessity for casements in the heart, when our features are so expressive of its operations ?

Resentment ! mortification ! — it is well, madam, — you have made me very ridiculous.

Bless me, sir, said I, staring in turn, what offence ? — can you be so ungrateful as to be displeased at my care for you ?

How the passionate creature swelled. — But recollecting that he was an extravagant favourite of my aunt's, and her visitor, I began to apprehend I had carried matters too far : — and, would you believe it, was so humble as to seek a reconciliation. — I hope, sir, you have so much of the Christian disposition, as to be capable of forgiving and forgetting on due solicitation. — It was enough — my extended hand did the business — which he half de-

youring, mumbled somewhat I neither understood, nor wished to understand; and immediately his whole features took the most smirking turn imaginable — when in pops the old lady — and the whole mystery was at once unravelled.

Should you have suspected that our aunt was a plotter? — No matter for your suspicions, I tell you she is an arrant one — it was all her scheme — the preachment, probably, only a repetition of her very expressions. — She certainly gave him his cue — as well as contrived the *tete a tete*, or my swain, I am convinced, would have pursued a less antiquated plan,

Encouraged by the apparent good footing we were upon, she was for officiously bestowing my hand in form, as an earnest at once of her approbation, and in order to hook me into a positive engagement.

She

MISS PITTBOROUGH. 55

She advanced—the colonel looked confident—told no tales.—Don't you tremble for your sister's fate.

Oh, the sacrifice! hide me, hide me, I am unequal to the fight. — You foolish girl you, did you imagine I should not protect myself from such horrid violence?

But how? nay, if you are so very impatient, you must go uninformed; my pen can never keep pace with your rapid imagination.

You struggled, fainted, ran away;—not one of the three I do assure you —I would have assumed a stern brow, but that would not have suited the old lady;—a smile, you know, would have been too encouraging for the gentleman:—so, steering skilfully between Scylla and Charibdas—with “softly, softly, my good madam, I hate repetitions—let me be given away but once, I beseech you.—I believe the

“ colonel is too well-bred to play the  
“ encroacher, and too well satisfied with  
“ the favourable acknowledgments I have  
“ already made, to complain.” — I came off  
with flying colours.

Our aunt gave me an approving twinkle  
of her eye (for glance you could not call  
it) : my admirer, indeed, raised his with  
melancholy deliberation — sighed — as if he  
had said — there is no remedy ! — cruel and  
provoking though thou art — I must still  
love on ; but as this half-rebellious beha-  
viour was unperceived by the good lady —  
the affair ended with the utmost appearance  
of general satisfaction.

But I must observe, that my aunt's  
over-sight was rather owing to accident  
than any defect in her penetration ; —  
for that vile cough she has for so long  
been subject to, happened to seize her at  
the very juncture I could have wished ; —  
and continuing until the colonel was in  
the

the utmost harmony of spirits, from merely the silly incident of hitting his head against mine, by his officiousness in reaching the gally-pot we are wont to have recourse to upon such occasions, it was impossible she should suspect he had felt the smallest discontent. Now I recollect myself, on my word I believe he almost kissed me — head did I say — how could I make so egregious a mistake — it was his face that came bounce against mine ; and an admirable hard one it is !

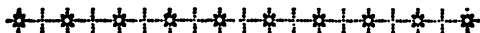
But not a syllable of all this to papa : — he is too considerate, and too wise, even to desire to see the nonsense that passes between a couple of silly girls : — that's a good papa ; whilst you forbear to seek, your dutiful daughter will never hide.

After all, is it not wrong-judged in your elderly folks, to reduce their poor children to stratagem, in innocent cases —



as it only teaches them tricks they would never otherwise have thought of; and early qualifies them for that very worst of employments — intrigue. — How inexcusable should we be, were we capable of abusing such indulgence as we experience.

LET-



L E T T E R VII.

Colonel DINGLEY to Mr. BROOKSBANK.

**Y**OUR friendly impatience to be informed of my success in my amour shall be gratified. O Ned ! I blush to acknowledge it, but this seeming innocent, this child of nature, proves a very tartar.

I cannot give you an idea of the scurvy treatment I am obliged to submit to—but I must make a virtue of necessity ; for I find it would cost me dearer to relinquish her, than to suffer myself, loaded as I am with chains, to grace her triumph.

Wheresoever she appears, she commands admiration : her person is irresistible ;

ble; whilst modesty, candour, humanity, and sweetness, evidently shine forth in every action: but, conscious of her own power, and naturally inclined to play the giddy humourist, though she communicates delight to every other person that addresses her, she cruelly contrives to torture me. We have now been acquainted a whole month, not a day of which (nor without unspeakable reluctance an hour) but I have spent part of it with her. In general conversation, none can excel her, but a *tete a tete* shews her to the best advantage.

How have I been charmed with the sentiments that have flowed from her lips in her serious reflecting moments.

Once, in particular, she was so perfectly the woman I could wish her, that I was drawn in to make a sober, unornamented declaration of my tender attachment to her; and depending upon the goodness of her

her understanding ; and, as it proved, with equal wisdom upon my own rhetoric, attempted to convince her, that the indulgence of the only foible I can discover in her whole composition, would be productive of very unpleasing consequences.

She seemed attentive — the flattery was too intoxicating for human nature to support. — I presumed to take her hand, pressed it with a similar degree of rapture, that glowed in my heart — and, I believe, was half frantic in my professions of love and gratitude — when suddenly she let me down with such precipitation that I verily concluded I should never have recovered myself. I would not again feel what I did upon that occasion, from a consciousness of the point of ridicule I must appear in, and the disappointment of all my pleasing hopes, for a diadem.

I do suppose my visible mortification and chagrin, gave no small pleasure to her  
vanity.

vanity ; and whether her good-nature, or  
 fly vivacity, was predominant, I will not  
 take upon me to determine ; but in the  
 midst of a thousand heroic resolutions of  
 renouncing such vile bondage, never behold-  
 ing her more, &c. &c. she most invitingly  
 extended that very hand I had so fondly  
 doated on, and with an affectation of sor-  
 row for having offended, that communi-  
 cated the utmost joy to my heart, begged  
 me to forgive and forget the folly she had  
 practiced.

What part, Ned, would you have  
 acted under such trying circumstances?  
 widely different to mine, I dare believe. —  
 My very soul was harmonized — it was no  
 time for dissimulation ; no time for discre-  
 tion : I threw myself, therefore, entirely  
 into her power, crying out, “ this is too,  
 “ too great condescension ; I am over-paid  
 “ for all the mortification you have given  
 “ me ; — but do not use me the worse for  
 “ finding me so devoted to you, that I  
 “ am

“ am incapable of having any will but  
“ yours.”

Good Mrs. Hutchens dropped in at this instant ; I had not only obtained her permission to pay my addresses to her charming niece, but she was pleased to honour me with her highest approbation. She perceived the happiness that warmed my heart, in my every feature ; and imagining she should serve us both, by forwarding our attachment, would have bestowed Miss Pittborough upon me in form, with a view, as I apprehend, no less to demonstrate her good liking of your friend, than prevent that volatile lady from looking any farther for an admirer : but notwithstanding I flattered myself I had some little reason to expect such a mark of her esteem would not have been reluctantly granted, she had the dexterity to evade the proposition, to her aunt's entire satisfaction ; and on my lifting up my eyes, by an involuntary impulse of discontent,

gave

gave me a look that immediately reduced me to order.

Where, Ned, is our boasted superiority? — where our firmness? when we can suffer ourselves to be so wantonly played upon: — are we only valiant, like the worst of cowards, where we are sensible our power is despotic? — and shall the woman, whose confidence in our honour has induced to place her whole happiness in our hands, alone experience the complicated ungenerous weight of our perverse inclinations? I am resolved not to act so unworthy a part — my tenderness, my complaisance (if ever I do become a husband) shall remain in full vigour, in spite of the matrimonial privilege, and whatever abatement my love might receive from time and long acquaintance — should add proportionable increase to those other feelings.

And should I even find myself deceived in the object of my choice, and that more than  
than

than half her perfections were the result of that natural artifice, an endeavour to recommend herself to the heart of a man she approved, or, as too frequently is the case, merely the creation of my heated brain, my complaisance should restrain me from betraying the ungrateful discovery, my tenderness cast the veil of friendly toleration over the common infirmities of humanity: — thus converting the lover into the kind companion, and considerate friend, had I not an illiberal or illiterate mind to deal with, I should reap such happy consequences from my conduct, as would leave neither of us reason to repent our union.

But if heaven has reserved so great a blessing for me as this lady's hand, I shall have no opportunity of convincing you of the sincerity of my prudent resolves, as all our life would be a scene of love.





## L E T T E R VIII.

From the same, to the same.

**F**RESH cause for uneasiness from every quarter ! Miss Kitty Hutchens is at length returned from her Hampshire excursion ; and my mistress is again playing off her torturing fancies.

You know Miss Hutchens was never a favourite with me ; her person, her mind, are equal impediments : and I now fear I shall have less reason than ever to be fond of her company.

There cannot be greater contrasts than these relations ; the one is a coquet by nature, the other from playfulness and innocent vivacity.

Kitty's

## MISS PITTBOROUGH. 67.

Kitty's soul is narrow, suspicious, revengeful. — Miss Pittborough's open, unoffending, generous ; she has no little passions to gratify, from having no superior : — the world and all its inhabitants contribute to promote her felicity ; therefore ill-nature or disappointment have never set upon a single feature.

With respect to her own sex, she is compassionate, benevolent, and sincere : — is any one deformed in person, she is sure of her favour and countenance ; — dejected in mind, or diseased in body, her sympathy is ever theirs ; — is their character attacked, she is their infallible advocate ; — are they distressed in their circumstances, her purse and heart is open for their relief : — yet, too giddy for reflection, she frequently incurs the censure of the malevolent ; — too honest for deceit, she becomes an easy dupe to the deceiver ; — and naturally fond of every species of raillery, where the object is justifi-

nable, she gives continual offence to the vain and affected, who retain a malicious impression of that severity that has wounded without amending them, and has long since been forgotten, with the occasion, by the agreeable raillier.

I will not display the opposite inclinations of her unamiable cousin; she is at present sufficiently mortified to secure her from my satire; bursting with envy at that superiority that her self-approbation and vanity would, but cannot, secure her from being sensible of, she industriously labours to improve every little giddy opportunity of condemning and ridiculing her lovely visitant; but the attempt is so evidently incited by the worst of passions, that it ever fails of success, and only increases her own dissatisfaction and torture.

I must acknowledge that there is one part of Miss Pittborough's conduct that lies too open to Miss Kitty's ill-natured attacks,

## MISS PITTBOROUGH. 69

attacks, and occasions me unspeakable uneasiness. — I will not conceal it from you — one blemish, amongst so many perfections, ought not to be wondered at; notwithstanding it is of such a nature as to cast an appearance of impropriety upon actions that are in themselves both unexceptionable and innocent.

Lively to excess, and perfectly undesigning, she suffers herself to be amused with the conversation of such beings, as from their insignificance, or self-consequence, are highly contemptible: — a superannuated beau, a military coxcomb, a fribble of whatever denomination, or a hard-mouthed student, are sure to obtain a distinction and attention with her; that, however flattering to them, is by no means a credit to her fine understanding.

The gouty Sir Matthew Sanxley is at present her reigning favourite: — he ogles her, with indefatigable industry, through

his fresh-wiped spectacles, gives her every advantage at cards, is eternally of her opinion; and, could he but throw aside his crutches, I dare believe would become my competitor for her hand at the ensuing ridotto.

She appears delighted with his parade and assiduity: — smiles upon him with the utmost complacency — suffers him to press her hand, with antiquated gallantry, each time he presents her the cards; — and, in short, it is but seldom that I can obtain a single glance. I am not so absurd as to be dissatisfied with her behaviour from conceiving she has any meaning in it; but as it deprives me of the pleasure I was accustomed to enjoy, of entertaining her without the interruption of an impertinent, I own it sets very uneasy upon me: add to which, it lays me under the disagreeable necessity of paying some civil attention to the equally neglected Kitty: it has been my misfortune, ever since I  
was

was acquainted with that lady, to be favoured with no inconsiderable share of her approbation, when the smartest beau she can pick up; otherwise I am totally neglected and disregarded.—I have heard her declare “How much she hates such unnatural mixtures as gravity and youth—  
 “a philosopher and a soldier, what contradictions?—and with such a set of  
 “features too, as utterly discountenance  
 “the absurdity.”—This may serve as a specimen of her happy talent for raillery—her expressions are, indeed, common place—her observations trite and despicable.

Mrs. Hutchens has been somewhat indisposed for these few days past; so that we have seen but little company, except the gouty baronet. Miss Pittborough affects a reserve that gives me no small pain—is less flighty than usual.—I in vain watch for a single look; she bestows not one upon me; and as for a moment’s con-

versation—it is to the last degree impracticable.

What will be the consequence of this change I know not;—but I greatly apprehend some new torture. I wish Mrs. Hutchens would favour me with a little private chat, perhaps she might be able to discover:—but, no, she would never forgive any indirect measures to obtain a knowledge of her intentions:—she has not a common mind—and must not be treated with roughness, indelicacy, or artifice.—Your advice would be very salutary:—pity the perplexity of your friend; but I charge you not to attempt ridiculing it—the wound is too green to bear a probe— if ever it can be healed by the methods. I have reason to think you would prescribe, it must be a work of time.—My good wishes attend you:—you shall hear from me again very soon.

L E T-



## LETTER IX.

MISS HUTCHENS to MISS BINFIELD.

**A**greeable to your injunction, I am now set down to give you a description of this country cousin ; for whose sake my over-complaisant mother has drawn me to town, before you could conveniently accompany me. I know not what to say concerning her : she fancies herself a compleat beauty : — but in my opinion has hardly the least pretensions to even the agreeable.

Her cheeks are most dazzlingly red ; — her eyes spirited, yet heavy and ill-coloured ; — her hair (untaught to comply with Pidgeon's discipline) rudely exuberant ; — her mouth, playing in a thousand superfluous smiles, bespeaks the self-satisfaction  
of



of her heart ; — her hands and arms a dead white, — and her shape most extravagantly genteel, render her entirely inelegant and unfashionable.

But who do you think has devoted himself to her service ; — colonel Dingley ! true, upon honour ! — he either does admire (or incomparably well dissembles an admiration of) her whole person, manner, &c. &c.

I am mistaken if she does not pay him for former insensibility ; for she seems to possess a comfortable share of perverseness and vanity : but these observations are *en passant* ; for I have not had above two hours conversation with her. My mother extols her to the skies, has been unspeakably happy in her company, and doubts not but I shall find her highly agreeable.

It is not the first error I have known that lady fall into from judging of her daughter's

MISS PITTBOROUGH. 75

daughter's inclinations by her own :—then she is so intolerably officious with respect to the colonel, so apparently promoting his growing approbation of her divine niece, that I believe I shall most heartily repent my journey.

I really wonder he can have the confidence to visit at our house, after so plainly indicating his dislike of a certain inhabitant :—but your military men can do any thing.

I am preposterously disgusted already ; how I shall support myself until your arrival I know not :—but I am well convinced that pleasure will be a stranger to my heart, and joy to my countenance, until we meet again.

LET-



## LETTER X.

Miss PITTBOROUGH to Miss NANCY  
PITTBOROUGH.

**Y**OU never saw our cousin Kitty—she returned from Hampshire but last night. Upon my word the young woman would be a very decent well-appearing young woman, if she would but give nature fair play ; but she is so over-run with vanity and affectation, that I believe we shall be very fashionable relations.

My good aunt hangs with apparent delight upon her every expression, though I will presume to affirm, that we have had much small talk introduced since her arrival.

I can-

I cannot enter into the sentiment that maternal fondness should so far blind us, as to render us insensible to the follies of our offspring, or create perfections that have no existence but in our own doating fancies. — Can we not at all times distinguish between black and white? — But, in short, Nancy, I am not a mother, consequently an incompetent judge of the matter. — I am not to be told that self-partiality is an innate principle: — and are not our children our second selves?

She arrived in a kind of evil hour; to which circumstance, perhaps, the unfavourable impression I have received of her is chiefly owing. — My aunt was anxiously busying herself in some little preparations for her reception, whilst the colonel and your sister were engaged in a delightful *tete a tete*. — My heart is narrow and selfish; I feel it palpably, or I should not so reluctantly have forgone my own little satisfactions, for the more important purpose of

of warming a truly worthy maternal bosom. By the way, I greatly apprehend that my lively cousin has by no means a due sense of the obligations she is under to this best of mothers — a strong mark of a bad disposition. — Her air is supercilious; and a kind of self-applause, or conscious merit, appears in her whole deportment.

She, indeed, condescends to give my aunt's opinion a patient hearing; but makes no scruple to dissent from it; or even ridicule it, where it is so unhappy as to meet with her disapprobation.

But, perhaps, I am premature in my judgment: there are a people upon earth who improve on acquaintance; I sincerely wish it may be the case in this instance; but my antipathy is uncommonly strong, and as uncommonly unaccountable. She affects to treat the charming colonel with coldness and disregard — I say affects; for it is impossible they should be her real sentiments:

timents : — he is not a figure to be disregarded, but by your absolute insensibles, a class I am persuaded Miss Kitty does not belong to : besides, she so greatly over-acts her part upon the occasion, that I cannot help suspecting : — but why do I trouble you with suspicions ; — you who I have so much reason to be convinced are an enemy to every species of distrust : — but give me leave to tell you, however amiable your disposition, it is extremely impolitic ; — and notwithstanding it might qualify you for the company of saints and angels, is altogether unbefitting this lower world : — the language of modern politeness is utterly dissimilar to the language of the heart, and would entirely mislead a literally believing mortal.

But I have news for you that will astonish you : — ah ! why was nature so lavish of her gifts ? — there is no resisting me ! — appearing and conquering is with me the same thing ! — though I must confess my  
newly

newly acquired slave took no small pains to render himself such, as without the assistance of a glass my charms would have been wholly undiscovered by him.

How I value myself for my sincerity ! — many would have been so disengenuous as to impose their conquest upon you for at least an Adonis, in order to enhance the value of it, and give an exalted impression of their extraordinary attractions ; but I am superior to every such little artifice ; or perhaps I conceive it to be a higher honour to warm an almost expiring, or at best frozen, heart, than merely engaging the admiration of the young and gay — who are so prone to admire, that it is no less wonderful if a new face fails to attach them for the short period of its novelty, than that the most compleat toast should be capable of reanimating the gout-struck breast of right honourable three-score.

How

How justly does rural life possess your approbation.—How unspeakably happy the effects of pure air, repeated exercise, and rising with the dawn, upon the constitution.—Our father has attained the eminence of sixty-six : his countenance undeprived of its floridity ; his heart of its vigorous pulsation, or his memory of retention ; (not to mention other mental advantages :) — but in town it is quite otherwise : — the bloom early decays, the nerves are early unstrung, and diseases, unknown to the Spartan race, make an early prey of the once not less hardy Briton.

I am far from wishing to revive the tremendous amusements of that warlike age ; but I would not only contribute my voice, but most extensive interest, to banish luxury and effeminacy from this my native land.—Both male and female, my Nancy, are gone astray : — no heart glowing with parental or maternal fondness (except in

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here and there a single instance) no pious filial emotions are now to be found:— the love of admiration and pleasure absorbs every other feeling; and the wrinkled matron, and superannuated coxcomb, reluctantly give place to the forward pressing of their equally misjudging offspring.

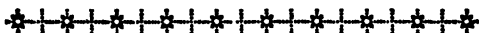
These are the colonel's sentiments, good sober soul. How could you possibly mistake them for mine? — and yet I suffer myself to be so unaccountably misled by them, as to join with him in his repetition of that queer stale epilogue,

O may again the happy time appear, &c. &c.

which, if you will give yourself the trouble of turning over your Cato, you will find tacked to the end of it, and thereby save me the trouble of transcribing it.

I am, my dear girl, (though by no means what you or the wise colonel could wish me) no less your affectionate friend,  
than

than if I was composed of the very materials with yourself — and — him ; I was within an ace of saying : — but, notwithstanding the tolerable share of my good opinion he has insinuated himself into, I should have thought you degraded by the comparison.



## L E T T E R   X I.

From the same, to the same.

**I** Observed in my last epistle, with a great degree of sagacity, what extraordinary effects different air is wont to produce upon the constitution. The purity, serenity, yet briskness, of our village breezes, was ever communicating the rude glow of health to one's cheek, hurrying one's blood with rustic rapidity through one's veins: — yet inspiring one's heart with only the mildest, meekest, and most gentle sensations: to ramble an infinite extent of green fields — to behold prospects beyond the aching eye's termination — to mix with four-footed beasts: — and listen to the half-torn throats of silly incessant screaming birds — is the utmost height

height of our village enjoyments. In town the case is widely different — fresh, or more properly the thick air is by no means permitted to salute the face of a finished belle—or sun-shine to incommode her sight: — the nature of her amusements, indeed, are such, that it is necessary for the day to repair the exhausted strength and spirits of the night; for the mind and body are so unhappily unfociable, that what enraptures the one, enfeebles the other.

For example, a ridotto — what proves the dirty composition of this human part of ours, equal to that drooping weariness that involuntarily steals upon us, in spite of all our efforts, even when sparkling at that elegant, that well regulated assembly? — the music insensibly loses its charms — our feet refuse to perform their office; — and the sober hour of five in the morning finds our eyes above three parts closed.

A ridotto is a place of all others the most delightful to persons of fashion, as few of an inferior rank are so hardy as to shove their faces there — your cits, indeed, affect a sort of toleration ; but they are very distinguishable from the politer company, both in their appearance and behaviour.

It is impossible to acquire those birth-rights of nobility, an undaunted look — a loud accent — a laugh at once expressive of self-sufficiency and contempt — an Amazonian gracefulness of motion — and an easy assured disregard of those low illiberal forms — time, place, and circumstance.

Kitty was drawn forth in all her best airs upon the occasion : — your friend, rather with a degree of (take it without disguise) elegant simplicity — her whole deportment bespoke her barbarous intentions — whilst a certain person appeared as unconscious

conscious of her power, as unprepared for conquest.

The colonel being somewhat in disgrace, although of the party, was not permitted to come within a furlong of a certain lady — every feature did visible penance — but not in a sufficient degree to obtain immediate absolution.

Kitty was charitable to excess, and laboured to supply every deficiency — but it was not the thing — pensiveness and contrition hung still upon his brow; nor could all her witticisms, or little arts, dispel them.

The coach arrived; unfortunately the baronet was nearest my hand — it would have been singular to refuse him the favour; — therefore Don Dismalo was reduced to the necessity of squiring the remaining lady.

I all spirits, the colonel in doleful dumps — the knight as brisk as bottled ale, which you know is seldom free from froth — and Miss Kitty as near being angry as pleased, were soon conveyed to the delightful scene of action.

The baronet's importance ceased on our entering the room : — gouty feet are but ill-qualified for motion — I looked round — not one pretty fellow within view : — his grace — the viscount, only a degree superior to monkeys : — I condescended to cast an eye of encouragement upon the really handsome colonel : — well, it is a valuable disposition that is easily intreated — he flew to obey my commands ; and we were inseparable the rest of the evening.

This same love, Nancy, is a wonderful kind of a disorder — affects the sight, understanding, nay, whole composition. — The colonel is naturally one of your very amiable, your very unassuming beings ; —

but the distinction paid him by your acquaintance rendered him quite another creature : — exultation, heart-felt exultation, over-spread his countenance : — he seemed to consider himself as a superior species to the rest : — and, perhaps, could you but have beheld him (though from a dissimilar motive) you would have subscribed to his opinion. — I do assure you the whole assembly did not afford a more compleat, more noble figure.

Mrs. Kitty picked up the long-sidèd heir of an earldom : — she would have triumphed, but for the apparent absurdity of the attempt.

The knight lamented his inability for my favourite exercise ; — but soon found consolation in a brilliant party for quadrille.

The hours passed rapidly on — at four the entertainment broke up ; and, with  
the



the reinforcement of his effeminate lordship, we were conducted home without accident or interruption. Heated, drowsy—fatigued, delighted, I retired to my pillow; and found a repose that much more than compensated the preceding evening's consumption of strength and spirits, and enabled me to undergo a second frolic.



Two o'clock, noon.

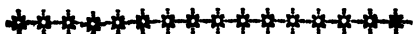
Sullen looks — Mrs. Kate is mortally offended — unhappy I — my superiority is insupportable to her : and so, my dear, by adding ill-humour to her other perfections, she will unquestionably remedy the killing evil.

You will but too probably accuse me of want of charity, respecting this girl : but I do assure you, in sober sadness, she  
has

**MISS PITTBOROUGH. 91**

has a malicious, ungrateful, and revengeful heart; as I could give you many instances, if I could prevail upon myself to stain my paper, or pollute my pen with such unworthy subjects.

**LET-**



## LETTER XII.

Miss NANCY PITTBOROUGH to  
PITTBOROUGH.

**H**AVE I the power, my dearest, to render you serious by intreaties? I fear I have not; and yet I am persuaded you would sacrifice every thing, but vivacity, to make me happy.

I am sensible it is my misfortune, when I wish to advise, I become instantly gloomy: but if you would consider my motive, you would not be disgusted at the consequence. My apprehensions for you are equally strong with my affection: then is it possible that my stile should be lively, when my heart is oppressed?

MISS PITTBOROUGH. 93

I would not be superstitious, yet am unable to subdue some very unaccountable and alarming suggestions.

O let me conjure you not to trifle with your happiness! Never was man, from appearances, so calculated to your taste as the colonel, or so well qualified to protect and conduct you through the intricate path of life: — do not, therefore, occasion idle delays; — a good work cannot be too soon accomplished; you are utterly unfit to be trusted with yourself: — some giddy flight you may unwarily be guilty of, may, but too probably, either totally disgust him, or fix an unfavourable impression upon his heart, that can never perfectly be erased. This new admirer that you treat so ludicrously, take care that he does not prove an instrument of unavailing mortification and repentance.

Men of sense, my dear, notwithstanding they may, for a time, appear without gall,  
and

and submit to be unworthily slighted, and unduly tormented, will, when least expected, in the language of the poet,

--- resume the empire which they gave,  
And soon the tyrant shall become the slave.

A generous mind, I grant you, must be incapable of descending to ungenerous actions; but we are so frequently deceived by the suggestions of our own hearts, that it is dangerous trusting frail mortality.

A woman of your spirit and disposition, that has practised so many shifts and turnings, when chafed, ought not to be surprised if the face of things at the long-run should be changed, and the same tormenting arts played off, in order to discover if she has any real affection for the man she has been pleased to honour with her hand, that she made use of, merely as she persuaded herself to try the sincerity of his attachment, though, in reality, to gratify her narrow despicable vanity. How otherwise

wife can we account for the inconsistencies in the character of a coquet? — Can we love an object whilst we wantonly torture it? — I own it is a refinement of cruelty I am utterly unacquainted with.

That you would but follow your *demure* sister's example! Her gentle swain experiences a happy exemption from doubt and suffering: — under the sanction of the father's approbation, he fears not access to the daughter; nor does he apprehend that her aspect will ever be unfavourable towards him, unless his conduct should substantially merit it.

The day for our union is fixed; we both look forward to it with as much confidence as the instability of human life will admit; well convinced that, unless some calamity that strikes our health or existence falls upon us, that morning's sun will find us unchanged in our sentiments. We have long forborne to seek a satisfaction  
out

out of ourselves : — our wishes, our concerns are for each other's happiness, prosperity, in which our dear father's ever been included : — and, however fashionable or contemptible we may appear in your sight, we would not exchange the peace and rational delight our limited prospects afford us, for all splendid follies grandeur is capable of bestowing.

Perhaps you will think this the end of all my dull epistles ; but let the sincerity of it atone for the want of spirit, ornaments ; honest truth shines best when least adorned : — the colonel will teach you lessons equally profitable, more agreeable language ; listen, therefore, to him, and the genuine dictate your heart — your love for him is as constant as the sun at noon day : — employ yourself in a legal manner to his friendship and protection — and my best congratulations shall await you ; forfeit

esteem, and depend upon it bitter repentance will be your portion : — the future employment of my pen unavailing condolance.



L E T T E R XIII.

MISS PITTBOROUGH to MISS NANCY  
PITTBOROUGH.

She only lov'd the loving He,  
He only lov'd the lovely She.

**T**HERE, my dear, in that borrowed couplet is contained the likeness and lovingness of my intended brother and yourself. — I hope the latter part of the fable, relative to the cage, &c. will never be applicable to such a pair : but the croaking of ravens is harmony, in my imagination, to the softest breath of matri-

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mony.



mony. O! how I tremble at your hardy approach to a precipice, that my head is abundantly too light to permit me to venture even within several acres of its leafy formidable verge.

I grant you there is a round about, but very intricate, track, by which it is possible to descend with little or no precipitation: but then the hazard is so extreme, that it requires a cool judgment, quick penetration, and an immoderate share of meekness, steadiness, forbearance, and resolution, to weather the point with any degree of safety.

The first step terrifies us: — we retreat — advance — retreat again — until our helper, rash and enterprising in his own nature, wearied by a repetition of our idle timidity, sets off alone, fairly abandoning us to every danger and inconvenience, unprotected, and unencouraged by his presence and example.

To

To be sure your prospects, as times go, are rather flattering than otherwise—as the man you propose setting out with is, in appearance, a sober, sedate, sure-footed man; and, in a manner, exempt from every vicious, restive, or frolicksome inclination:—but are you certain he will continue so?—is he not human; consequently changeable:—is not the engagement indissoluble? must you not abide by the evil as well as enjoy the happy consequences (if any can attend the loss of liberty)? can he feel a calamity and you not participate? I know your heart too well—it will derive all its future felicity from his smiles; and, by a single frown, would be over-whelmed with unspeakable anguish.

O, my dear, what ugly likenesses have you frequently drawn of that masculine sex; and, I now begin to fear, with too much justice:—have you not painted them as unfathomable in their schemes—un-

controulable in their inclinations — obstinate in their resolves, and irrestrainable in their resentments? — have you not described self-gratification as their spring of action — despotic power their pretended birth-right — want of tenderness their boast — and a contempt for every religious duty their glory? — have you not strongly inculcated the opinion into my heart, that they early imbibe wrong impressions of us females? — ridiculous, mercenary, weak, and artful beings, would you not persuade me they are taught to consider us? — how mortifying the thought — that we accustom ourselves to be smart upon them : — they are not without their sullen rough repartees — we refuse them — it is death to their pride — they will marry us in spite of ourselves, and have ample revenge.

They redouble their flattery (is not this the very lesson you have learned me); our vanity assists their artifices — we become the dupes — the triumph is wholly theirs.

But

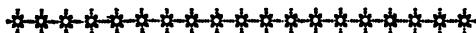
MISS PITTBOROUGH. 101

But what is all this to you and your gentle artless swain? — I indeed expected the question; — yet am but ill-prepared to answer it — and can only say, that experiments are by no means eligible, as disappointment is as likely to be the fruits of our labour as the desired success.

I thought the colonel — that is so like you rustic dames — a pretty fellow is no sooner mentioned, than the licence, ring, and parson, dance before your eyes; and a wedding is marked down as an infallible contingency — whilst we sit loose to every such domestic idea: — admiration is all we aim at — and a proper display and exertion of our power, the whole business of our lives. To make a sensible man play the fool, is it not exquisite? To be cursed, renounced, and beloved, in the same instant — to see them now struggling to get free — and now eagerly re-embracing the fond infatuation, is rapture to every woman of spirit's heart; and you will allow

I was never deficient as to that title.

But I will, for once, become the v  
thing you wish me — dismiss my self-co  
sequence—hold my levity suspended—f  
my eyes to every idle prejudice —  
tumbling Mrs. Vanity indignantly fr  
her throne, candidly confess, that, by y  
prudent choice, you cannot fail of p  
curing yourself every valuable, every  
tional felicity; that my union with the  
lonel would, in all probability, rectify  
regulate all those idle inclinations that  
terribly mislead me: — and that we  
both of us be so happily and advanta  
ously disposed of, is at present the fin  
desire of my heart; but how long it r  
continue so is very uncertain, I mean a  
that part that respects myself.



LETTER XIV.

MISS HUTCHENS to MISS BINFIELD.

**M**ortified to death, and fatigued with playing the hypocrite, how is it possible to enter upon entertaining subjects — the town at present has no charms for me; a crowded assembly creates disgust, and retirement is all gloom and horror, for want of your agreeable company.

How much food should we find for satire; how inexhaustible our mirth — if you could but once behold this imaginary goddess — I absolutely am sunk in my own opinion, no less than I am neglected in every bright circle: this cousin, this cousin appears with unspeakable eclat; and I seem

dwindled into an humble nymph—she the Diana, I merely one of her train.

But I live in hopes of some favourable change—she seems dancing upon the edge of a precipice; and, if I can conveniently contrive it, shall not want a little shove to determine her fate. The silly colonel has not a wish beyond laying his liberty at her feet:—but she truly spurns the blessing, for no other reason that I can discover, than that it may be easily obtained. — She cannot forbear playing off some airs and graces with Sir Mathew Sansfey — I think it will do by and by—if she makes a tool of him merely for the pleasure of tormenting one of the finest fellows in England, why should he not be made an instrument of her punishment? — With your assistance I am sure I could effect her reduction from this most arrogant height, to the lowly estate of unavailing mortification — but I can do nothing without you. Who could, with any degree of patience,  
bear

bear to be shouldered out of every one's approbation ; even my mother's affection for me is diminished since her introduction into her family ; and that by an artifice so pretty, and so amiable, that the world either will not, or cannot detect it.

The colonel is ever extolling her openness and generosity — I have, indeed, been favoured with a specimen of each — for she has not scrupled openly to ridicule my dress, my behaviour, and, as I have been informed, generously laments, in my absence, the weakness of my understanding, and the pernicious effects of my mother's ill-judged indulgence.

Sir Mathew and this incomparable one have for some time been upon such good terms, that the poor slighted soldier has been forced to seek quarter from a less hostile party : — you know my folly, nor shall I ever conquer it — and as it is my misfortune to be the prey of a hopeless  
passion,



passion, I own it is a great support to my pride, that the object sufficiently justifies the partiality he has inspired. Had I the same power over him that he has been pleased to invest this lady with — how differently I should exercise it — but this is idle prattle — yet you have often flattered me that he does not dislike me, notwithstanding the many slights I have sustained; and that half the uneasiness I have suffered, has been owing to my own petulance, that would not suffer me to wait a favourable turn, without playing off some flirting airs, that instead of answering the desired purpose, have only drawn upon me additional neglect: therefore, who knows, if I could have followed your advice, and this all-conquering beauty had not been cast in his way, what effect time, a good fortune, and some other advantages might have produced, notwithstanding his too natural insensibility; at least I had not forfeited that support of the wretched — a ray of hope — which her presence totally ob-

MISS PITTBOROUGH. 107

obscures. — Self-preservation incites me to remove her — and removed she shall be — or I will die in the attempt. I conjure you, my dear friend, to destroy this evidence of my folly — you have hitherto been faithful to me — forsake me not at this trying juncture — but permit me to pour my grievance into your bosom.

LET-



## LETTER XV.

MISS PITTBOROUGH to MISS NANCY  
PITTBOROUGH.

**I**T is impossible I should be mistaken! Kitty, the self-sufficient Kitty, is most certainly smitten with this man of valour—he cannot surely—but the supposition is odious.—I have already observed that she is not, even what nature intended her, agreeable — and I know the colonel to be an utter enemy to every species of affectation.

Yet I own it teazes me to see him so assiduous, as the flirting girl has now and then the art to render him—and I fear she perceives it, as I have detected her casting  
kind

MISS PITTBOROUGH. 109

kind of triumphant glances upon me on such occasions.

I must be satisfied myself—and give her the mortifying satisfaction, that I possess a superior power over him, or I cannot exist — my superannuated gallant will be here this afternoon — I have it — and you shall know my success.



Tuesday morn.

I am undone, my dear Nancy — the colonel despises my folly — condemns my proceedings; and has even presumed to lecture me with the utmost severity: but it shall cost me dear, but I will make him repent his presumption and arrogance. — O, I could pull my cap with vexation! — but it is resolved—his stubborn heart shall bend, or mine shall break. — No, madam, said

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said he to my aunt, as Kitty, in order to increase my mortification, told me — “I will no longer continue the dupe I have been — my eyes are opened — and notwithstanding I still admire her few perfections — I can happily see her defects likewise — nor shall I be easily lured a second time into her snares.”

Who could have believed him capable of such cold deliberate disrespect — what was uttered in my presence might be the effect merely of passion — but to reserve his contempt and defiance for a private ear, and that too the ear of the greatest enemy I have upon earth — was the overflowings of malice — and can never be forgiven.

I have obligations to my pride I never yet suspected it capable of conferring — it has been, and is my only support — or I should sink with confusion and mortification. He had the confidence to ask me, if I could suppose him weak enough to enter-

### MISS PITTBOROUGH. III

tain the preposterous idea, that my approbation of Sir Mathew was real : — “ he was  
“ but too sensible of the motive ; but that  
“ the artifice was insufficient to produce  
“ the intended effect : — he owned I had  
“ the power of most cruelly tormenting  
“ him ; and he was, perhaps, as soon  
“ blown into a flame as I unkindly wished ;  
“ but that power must be supported by  
“ probability.”

Audacious creature — but I will be composed, and take a severe deliberate revenge. I am born for mortification ; for, instead of recommending myself to your compassionate consideration, I shall incur your ridicule, or at best a most tedious lecture — I cannot bear it at this period ; nor should I, in the smallest degree, profit by even the wisest sentiments that can fall from your pen : — therefore spare me, Nancy, I beseech you, and do not add to my present dissatisfaction.

LET-



## LETTER XVI.

MISS NANCY PITTBOROUGH to MISS  
PITTBOROUGH.

**I**Ndeed, my dear sister, you are greatly mistaken in your opinion of my heart; pity is a request I never yet denied the unhappy; and unhappy I must consider you in the most comprehensive sense of the word.

Providence has been peculiarly gracious to you ever since the first instant of your existence: — you had the best of mothers continued to you so long as her care was essential to your well-doing: — you have ever enjoyed an uninterrupted share of health, contentment, and reputation; — nor need you have one wish ungratified, if  
you

you could but once persuade yourself not to suffer them to exceed the bounds of reason and propriety.

But all these blessings which thousands vainly sigh for, are not only totally disregarded by you, but madly thrown away— whilst error alone has the direction of your pursuits; and mortification, instead of promised pleasure, becomes the fruits of your labour.

How grating must it be to sensibility like yours, to feel the honest reproaches your heart undoubtedly suggests to you—to see yourself in the odious, though just light of an ungrateful, giddy, misjudging being, hurried on by a fatal levity into improprieties, that your very nature is repugnant to, yet restrained by a false, a contemptible pride, from making an honourable retreat.



I have no quarrel with you, my good girl, for being subject to follies and vanities; but for tamely suffering your whole life, happiness, and fame, to become a prey to them. The first is your misfortune, the second your highest fault.

Was you less capable of conquering your perverse inclinations, had you never been taught to distinguish between right and wrong, or never amiably and voluntarily rejected the former, and adopted the latter for your rule of action (except when you indulged a few idle sallies, that by having no particular aim, could be productive of no bad consequence) I should address you in very different terms; and, instead of awakening reflections, you would receive my most friendly advice, and strongest admonitions: — but how absurd we should deem an unlearned peasant, whose vanity should incite him to preach to a learned congregation, is a question that requires no solution.

I have

MISS PITTBOROUGH. 115

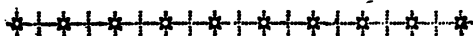
I have already given my sentiments upon repeated occasions similar with the present ; and can therefore only intreat you to determine, without further perplexity or unmeaning evasions, to make both me and yourself happy.

Return, O return to propriety and peace ! for they cannot be separated : shew the greatness of your soul by acknowledging a due sense of lately practised folly ; and once more re-establish yourself in the heart you love.

Believe me, it is not an antiquated principle, that kindness should result from affection, or that esteem can perish, without involving tenderness in the same ruin. The conflict may be severe ; but too frequent repetitions of ill-treatment will cure the most lively passion : and you may, in some measure, judge from the pain the colonel's assumed neglect of you (for assumed I am persuaded it must have been, if he ever

was guilty of neglect) has given you, how well you could bear his absolute breaking with you. I will not give you the least account of myself, or affairs, until you have, by making proper atonement for past transgressions, entitled yourself to some pretensions to rationality.

LET-



L E T T E R   X V I I .

Colonel DINGLEY to Mr. BROOKSBANK.

**I** AM stung to the soul by the folly of a woman, whom I persist to love in defiance of my better judgement.

Never was fascination equal to mine—contempt, every kind of contempt, but the one I have met with, I could have borne with patience; but to be treated like a driveller, to have my peace attacked by so trite, so palpable an absurdity, as giving the preference to a lump of illiterate and infirm mortality, is, beyond all conception, mortifying. 'Sdeath! and yet it has succeeded:—its end been perfectly answered—ridiculous though I feel it—I am

mortified ; and she, no doubt, exults in the success of her artifice.

I perceived the shallow plot, before it was even ripe for execution ; and, notwithstanding the difficulty of the attempt, was prepared to give her scorn for scorn. I, indeed, was so far duped by the treachery of my own heart, as to persuade myself, that she was greatly sunk in my opinion, that her beauty was a trifling possession, her mental endowments all rendered corrupt and unamiable, by one inclination, that from the pain and mortification it occasioned me, I could never bring myself to even palliate for the future : but the wretched tool had the presumption to offer, and she the cruelty to permit him to salute her, on taking his leave for the evening only ; which, in one instant, overthrew all my great resolves. Had you but seen how I supported myself the preceding part of the day, you would never have suspected me capable of betraying  
my

my dignity, or that rage and jealousy could exist in so cold a breast as mine.

O, how I reproached her ! called her honour, discretion, understanding in question — ridiculed the practice she had been guilty of — nay, was so far transported, as to affect a talent I never had the least pretensions to, and, till that moment, most heartily despised, ycleped mimicry — and at length — worked her mortification and resentment to such a pitch, that she quitted the apartment in tears, protesting she would never see me more.

But surely a heart so gentle, humane, and amiable as her's, cannot be capable of persevering in such a horrid resolution. — I have not slept the whole night, nor perhaps may ever sleep again, unless she will be reconciled — my very brain is shook — I find it impossible to live without her — and therefore do think it is a thousand

times more eligible to be deemed a fool—  
than become a madman.



Neon.

A pretty piece of work I have made of it: I am just returned from a scene, the remembrance of which I shall never lose, but with my existence.

She is ill — dying for aught I know to the contrary, and has most pathetically forgiven me.

I entered Mrs. Hutchens's parlour with my usual familiarity, not expecting to find Miss Pittborough there; but how shall I express my astonishment and affliction, when I beheld her fainting in Kitty's arms.

I had

MISS PITTBOROUGH. 121

I had conceived that nothing could be more lovely than the bloom of her countenance ; but I found her charming language still more attractive.

She opened her eyes — I would have retired, apprehensive of discomposing her, and in order to recover myself — but she smiled upon me with unspeakable complacency ; and begged she might not fright me away. Down I sat upon the first chair — unable to reply ; I was, indeed, half choaked.

“ You and I, colonel, resumed she, were  
“ but indifferent friends last night ; but if  
“ you have no objection, all hostilities  
“ shall cease between us ; and we will  
“ treat each other for the future in a more  
“ suitable manner : you, as a gentleman,  
“ had some right to complain of my conduct ; and I, as a proud female, could  
“ not be perfectly satisfied with yours : —  
“ but



“ but I am not well, and should be glad  
“ to retire: — you will remember, sir,  
added she, in the most kindly accent as  
she rose to quit the room, “ we are to  
“ meet (if ever we do meet again) as  
“ friends and acquaintance ought to do.”

I attempted to speak — but found it still  
impossible: — she perceived my disorder;  
and, with a condescension and goodness  
that I could little have expected, held out  
her hand to comfort me.

On my knees I would have kissed it,  
but she would by no means permit me;  
“ I am no deity now sir; said she, I sen-  
“ sibly feel I am not — low and weak — I  
“ cannot receive adoration — perhaps” —  
but she did not finish the sentence; and I  
could only follow her with my eyes.

Alas, my friend, I shall never see her  
more! — She hardly appeared to be an  
inhab-

MISS PITTBOROUGH. 123

inhabitant of this world — nor will she long continue so — she was too, too good to live—too great a blessing to fall to my share; nor will there remain one female on earth, in any degree, comparable to her.

LET-



# LETTER XVIII.

From the same, to the same.

**I** HAVE spent the whole day at Mrs. Hutchens' — but what a day — apprehension, anxiety, and bitter remorse, my only companions.

Mrs. Hutchens never once quitted her lovely charge ; but her daughter, from an impertinent officiousness, frequently stole a quarter of an hour to console me, as she called it. Malicious, infernal consolation ! her lips speak one language, her eyes another : — but I despise and detest her as she deserves.

Miss Pittborough's disorder is a sore throat and violent fever — the physician is doubtful ;

doubtful ; I am distracted ; yet she, I hear, is perfectly resigned. She was delirious in the afternoon — and called upon me with extreme tenderness, as the apothecary informed me, who happened to be present — what hateful forms, that I, who am most interested, must be denied the sight of her ! — But if my whole fortune can save me from the horrid calamity of losing her, without one last farewell look, it shall not fall upon me. I have determined to bribe her nurse, who is a distant relation of one of my servants, to convey me into her apartment, and permit me the heart-wounding satisfaction of tracing the power of death, in each cruelly altered feature.

What amends can I ever make you for pestering you thus with my affairs, especially as they are of such a nature as cannot afford you the least entertainment ?

I write,

I write, indeed, at present, in order to keep myself from greater mischief ; and I can only expect you to read from a similar motive. My heart is miserably depressed — yet I fear what I now suffer is only a prelude to what is in store for me — can I support ? — But adieu ! — To-morrow I shall endeavour to carry my favourite scheme into execution, and shall then resume my present employment.

L E T-



# L E T T E R   X I X .

From the same, to the same.

**I** HAVE seen her, Ned, seen the dear lovely expiring creature, without the knowledge of any one person but the nurse — what will not money accomplish? — I watched the greatest part of the night in her chamber, silent, solemn, and gloomy as the regions of death. She lay very still, except at intervals — I never saw a fever rage with such violence — in one of her deliriums she caught my hand to save her from some imaginary danger — it was daggers to my heart, as I could not be insensible to the impossibility of preserving her from the grave.

I have

I have only increased my own difficulties by the very step I flattered myself would lessen them : — could I But have continued by her until her dissolution, I think the stroke would be less severe — but it is a groundless suggestion — my imagination is disturbed ; and I fancy a million of absurdities — it would be highly improper for me to be present at such an exigence, as in all probability, by being unable to conceal my own agonies, I might in a most dreadful degree increase her's ; the moment of death is not a moment for confusion.

She is by no means so much altered in her countenance as I expected ; but her voice is quite changed — laboured, thick — Alas, it is the voice peculiar to her alarming circumstances !

What must not her father, her sister feel, if they are acquainted with her condition ? — But no, I remember Mrs. Hutchens  
said

said she should conceal the melancholy tidings as long as possible. — How shall I dispose of myself when she is no more — the object of my tenderest, my first affection? — I wish I may be able to act with the least consistence — but I shall then have no choice — no pursuit.

Will you, can you, Ned, embrace such a heavy incumbrance as the company of a man sunk down with affliction; — for a military life will lose its charm? — will it not be too severe a tax upon your friendship to sooth, to support, to save me from despondence? — But I have ever found you friendship's self, and therefore can rely upon your best kindness.



## LETTER XX.

Mr. BROOKSBANK to Colonel DING

I AM sorry to find you so very distressed in preaching and practice. Did I live under a similar calamity to the one you deplore, how many philosophic arguments would you not urge to teach me resignation? I, indeed, greatly lament the untimely fate of this valuable lady. — I tell you, Charles, lovely as your person ever accustomed to draw this drooping form, I could not persuade myself

to visit a person at a small distance from that village that gave her birth ; and you will not be surprised that I indulged my curiosity with some little enquiries concerning her, especially as it was attended with no other trouble or expence, than an extreme delightful walk. The country is beautiful, even to excess — one fine prospect so immediately succeeding another, that, like Æsop's fables, one cannot easily determine which to feast upon. I was so fortunate as to overtake a very intelligent person at some little distance from the houses, who, with a volubility naturally far from inconsiderable, (and deriving additional vigour from gratitude) poured forth a whole volume of intelligence relative to his benefactress : — in short, I was convinced that she was esteemed a little goddess to the utmost verge of this happy retreat — no one thinks they can sufficiently extol her humanity or generosity ; for whoever affects the one, is sure to participate the other.

At such an early age, surrounded as she was with every charm of approbation and indulgence, to lull those valuable inclinations to sleep ! I own it is astonishing she could be attentive to distresses, she could scarcely have any idea of, had she not pursued the most effectual method of obtaining information, becoming a voluntary spectator of them.

To visit the sick, to clothe the naked, and comfort the afflicted, was her every day's employment ; and so far from being wearied, she would frequently lament, that there was not above eighteen hours in the twenty-four that could be employed to advantage.

But, notwithstanding these beauties in her character, she never could have made you happy — giddy to excess, and a stranger, if not an enemy, to controul ; where would have been the social friend, the endearing companion ? — And in proportion

portion to the greatness of the perfections she was really mistress of, would have been your concern and mortification, to find her, in some essentials, so inexcusably defective.

I mention these particulars merely for your use; forget them if she lives; but if you lose her, let them never be forgotten. That misfortunes are blessings in disguise, is an adage of such reputation as to require no comment; and, perhaps, this seeming evil may deliver you from the most shocking reality you ever experienced.

Your peace was most certainly in imminent danger from this lady's conduct, even in a single state; and had she married you, and continued her flightiness, or bestowed her hand upon some happier rival — you would have considered a natural deprivation of her (and such, however dreadful, is the present that threatens you) as a

species of felicity in comparison of those already mentioned.

I grant you, such strokes are not easily overcome ; yet with the assistance of your own reason, and the conversation of friendship, I do hope to see you bear it with manly fortitude. I think as highly of Miss Pittborough on one hand, as I disapprove her on the other ; and had there been any probability of her being your's, so far from pointing out, I would have been the first to draw a veil over her defects. — Hasten to me so soon as her fate is determined, and I will endeavour to receive you to tranquility, if not happiness.

LET-



LETTER XXI.

Miss HUTCHENS to Miss BINFIELD.

A VERY pretty incumbrance this fine lady has at length rendered herself! — She is, indeed, my dear girl, confined to her bed with a violent distemper; from whence there is but little probability of her ever rising again. I am buried alive—we are denied to every creature; and, as it is my mother's pleasure to confine herself to a dismal sick apartment, I am compelled, for the sake of decency, however reluctant, to follow her example.

Yet do not conclude that this love has divested me of humanity; I should not only compassionate this relation's sufferings,

K 4 but,

but, with the utmost diligence and pleasure, endeavour to mitigate and relieve them, had they not been derived from so unworthy a source. You must know that, without any provocation upon earth, she was pleased to quarrel with the colonel—he, simpleton-like, could not conceal the uneasiness her behaviour gave him—she, elated with success, resolved to give him a proof of her power beyond human patience to support. It was so foolish an affair, that I do not remember particulars—but, contrary to her expectation of seeing him at her feet, acknowledging her sovereignty, and intreating forgiveness, *she roused the lion in his den, he stalked abroad, and the wide forest trembled at his roar*—in other words, he was so highly provoked by her ingratitude and folly—that he no longer scrupled venting his due resentment.—The pretty soul shed some crocodile tears—he was within an ace of being softened, when suddenly she bounced away with all the dignity and  
6 rage

rage of a tragedy queen, I mean an itinerant one — for there was much more of the low fury than majesty in her aspect.

Well, how he raved — against himself though you must observe — for the dear creature's tears had so effectually washed away her transgressions, that he was ready to hang himself for having forced them from her proud heart — I would have opened his eyes in a particular or two — but I thought he would have eat me : — I really could not have conceived that even passion was capable of rendering his face so deformed, had I not received ocular demonstration. — He at length took an abrupt leave, cursing himself, his evil stars, but excluded the author of all he suffered from every share in his execrations.

It was death to me, you may easily believe, to behold such a scene ; and whilst I was ruminating upon the strange witchcraft



craft of my cousin, I received an account of her being very much indisposed, and that she had retired for the night.

Conscious that she deserved no small punishment for the preposterous part she had acted — I could not for my soul pity her — and did not doubt but a third part of the indisposition was merely counterfeited, in order to intimidate her slave into due obedience.

The morning arrived — she obeyed the breakfast summons, though she looked like a witch ; and I am firmly of opinion had never closed her eyes the whole night. My mother was scared at her countenance, and a profusion of tender enquiries of her health (and not one reproach) was the consequence. She said her throat was much affected, and she believed she was in a high fever—the bell — I wonder it could resist such a tremendous pull—instantly brought

brought a herd of fellows into the room — John was dispatched this way, Thomas that — for proper assistance.

The gentlemen of the faculty arrived — and with that consequential air peculiar to their profession, declared her to be far gone in a desperate distemper. — My mother—I thought she would have fainted — whilst I received the information with surprising magnanimity. You very high-spirited people, when free from every disagreeable attack, are ever remarkably low when they conceive themselves to be in danger. — Such was this lady; she drooped, she languished. — Phlebotomy was judged requisite—her delicate apprehensions were admirable. — My mother wisely persuaded her to have the operation performed in her own apartment — but no — the parlour had its attraction—the colonel would otherwise have been deprived of a shock his too simple heart was but ill capable of supporting.

The

The operation over—the gentlemen and mama retired—this haughty beauty condescended to lift me, though with the utmost distance and circumspection, relative to the colonel's behaviour. — When people angle with such dexterity, 'tis pity they should be disappointed. A speech occurred to me, which I could have wished him to have made: I ventured, however, to place it to his account—it shot through and through her gentle heart, and she sunk, with becoming grace, into my arms.—At this unlucky instant the enamoured youth sneaked into the room—with a view, no doubt, to obtain a mitigation, if not an absolute revocation of his cruel sentence. You are no stranger to the manly beauty of his countenance—what a metamorphosis—no hunted devil ever looked like him—he started—he made an effort to retreat—but the dying fair—with unspeakable judgment opened her eyes at the very juncture—and besought him to continue where he was—he obeyed—who could do  
more

more or less on such an occasion?—The scene was as fulsome as folly and artifice could render it; and, notwithstanding all her complaints, I am mistaken if the colonel was not in an infinite worse state than herself. However, as the old-fashioned proverb says, Mocking is catching; so what was at first little more than well-managed hypocrisy—has been within an ace of carrying her off. She continues still in very imminent danger, and the uncertainty of the event—is torture to the colonel.

He passes his hours in our parlour—alone, disconsolate—and I can perceive that every endeavour to amuse, does but increase his vexation.—But, dear creature, how unmercifully am I trespassing upon your time, patience, and good-nature! But I know you will excuse it all when I tell you, that it is an unspeakable relief to me to communicate my sentiments to you, as I can safely rely upon  
your

your prudence and confidence.—I write again so soon as I come out of pence.



## L E T T E R XXII.

Colonel DINGLEY to Mr. BROOKSBANK

A STRANGE comforter thou art, true Ned! “ If she dies, think unfavourably of her, it will lessen your affliction—if she lives forget every defect, and once more consider her Perfection’s self.”—A very pretty, whimsical absurd kind of a doctrine!—No, No! had I most unhappily been deprived of it—our friendship had attained a final termination—your prophane advice—you are a sad dog—but she lives, the violence her distemper is past, and I have no power

of resentment remaining. What happy prospects break in upon me — I shall once more behold her lovely, though impaired, countenance—I shall be permitted to converse with her — whole hours, perhaps, converse with her, and the only defect of her nature, the test of her humanity, may, perhaps, be more than half extinguished. If you could but be a spectator of the fancies by which I am agitated, I am convinced you would be tempted to take out a statute of lunacy against me, in favour of my next heir. I have not yet been admitted an eye-witness of the returning health, or rather retreating distemper of this mistress of my affections; but I am sufficiently credulous to trust each flattering report. I constantly reside in the first parlour — every foot-step that I hear upon the stairs, throws me into a tumultuous kind of satisfaction. The door flies open — Does she continue in the same promising state? — Heaven avert every unfavourable symptom! — Has she mentioned me? —

Does

Does she sleep? Can she eat? Are her looks in the smallest degree improved? These successive questions are addressed to every creature that approaches me, and on their retiring—the door is again shut to— I took three or four lively hops upon the carpet—cast my eyes in the glass—smile at my frantic behaviour—open the first book I meet with—the page is dull—the print wretched—though I am not able to distinguish a single letter.

A rap at the door—it is the physician—I will pay my compliments—pho, no, 'tis only the apothecary—he is an honest countenanced man—it is his medicines that have restored me to new life—he shall therefore, he must, be my friend.

Thus is my time spent, and thus shall I continue to spend it—until I experience sympathetic serenity, from beholding it in the object my soul doats on.

L E T-

portunity, I fear I should soon become that lost thing, a wife !

But Kitty Hutchens will take care to prove an impediment to every private interview—I am greatly indebted to her you must allow.



I can write but little at a time ; but as I find myself able to resume my pen for a few moments at least, — I must take up Mrs. Kitty where I set her down, and for once degrade myself so far as to make her my principal subject.

Methinks 'tis very odd that people can be so dull of apprehension as this girl affects to be—'tis true, my eyes at present are not very intelligent—but the colonel's have for these three days past most pathetically intreated one half hour's *tête-à-tête* — she, however, remains callous, and he



must submit. I fancy my disposition has undergone an equal change with my person, by my late illness — I seem not to have one flighty inclination left — it must be confessed I am far from the same woman in any respect — my complexion — my whole countenance is deprived of all that ever was agreeable in it: — but as my admirer has frequently declared, that person was but a second or third consideration with him — you know I can be in no danger of losing him — a soldier must be incapable of making a dishonourable retreat. But however he may be satisfied with my outside — how will he rejoice at the happy alteration within? — Instead of finding me as heretofore froward, frolicksome, and so forth — if I should become the meek docile animal both he and you have so industriously laboured to render me! You must be sensible, that notwithstanding your arguments were very prettily urged — and his admirably supported, that they could be by no means so convincing as an attack

upon

upon the health. — We immediately become detached from a world we are unable longer to enjoy; and I fear much good resignation deserves no better name, than making a virtue of necessity.



Wednesday.

Miss Kitty at last, contrary to her inclination, has been compelled to gratify the colonel's most earnest desire — nor has he failed to make due advantage of it. I have no power of resistance left — he bore all before him — and found me so passive, so encouraging (not to give it a worse name) that he ventured to lay his whole heart before me.

As to my abated charms—he esteems it a most happy circumstance:—my loss is so trifling, in comparison of his gain, that, excepting the pain I endured, he shall ever

remember it with heart-felt satisfaction. He even went so far as to mention consulting my aunt respecting deeds (of purchase, Nancy, though he did not give them that odious name) talked of spending some time at his country house — many improvements to be made there — shady walks — elegant alcoves — inviting streams — and a most lovely companion.

I could not deny but it was all very pretty — but as the road lay, I had objections — a church ! — a ceremony ! — I could not easily reconcile myself, especially as I felt a kind of natural antipathy at that juncture to travelling. But I had reason to apprehend, from his smiling countenance, that my looks did not give much strength to my expressions — and he still persisted in the same dull strain.

The subject heavy and soporific in its nature — no wonder I was overcome. — I begged him to retire — whilst I indulged  
the



## LETTER XXIII.

From the same, to the same.

CAN there, Ned, upon earth be a happier mortal than your friend. I was not even tortured with expectation; but the news of her being able and desirous to see me, was communicated, and I conveyed to her apartment in one and the same instant. A gentle blush over-spread her countenance when I approached, and I was even permitted to congratulate her on her recovery, in a manner that affected my whole frame — for never till that moment had I touched her lips. She is greatly reduced, languid, drooping — a soft sorrow steals upon my heart — but when I re-

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collect her late condition,—I revive, and am all rapture and love.

I was compelled to make but a short visit; but she kindly condescended to tell me, when I was preparing to retire, that it should be my own fault, if I was not her daily visitant:—you may be certain I shall have much to answer for upon that account. Kitty spitefully remarked—that it was almost worth dying to be so outrageously lamented.—I was within an ace of making her a tart reply; but judged it impolitic to offend her at that juncture. That I could but annihilate the hours that lye between me and a second visit—but, as Scriblerus observes, it is a very modest wish—considering of how little consequence one individual is in the whole creation.

I have burnt your last letter, and may the remembrance of it perish with it:—it

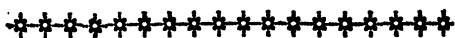
was

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was a clumsy, ill-digested production — and utterly unworthy of the writer: — you was not wont to be so illiberal — but I forgive you on condition that you never suffer any future occasion to draw you into a like transgression.

L 2

LET-



## LETTER XXIV.

Miss PITTBOROUGH to Miss NANCY  
PITTBOROUGH.


I HAVE the pleasure to find that my dear sister has happily been exempt, by my aunt's prudence, from every anxiety she would infallibly have suffered, had she been informed of the near approach I have made to the grave. Four days my danger was extreme — but I am now perfectly restored to health, though terribly emaciated. The valuable colonel has been so amiably interested in my fate, that I will not answer for the consequences. — My strength, both of body and mind, is greatly impaired — and if he should find an unlucky opportunity of renewing his importunity,

human being than yourself; I wish I could add salutary at the same time; the eminence of pleasure you had attained — the blooming graces of your person — and the idle admiration by which you was surrounded, contributing to persuade you that you was more than mortal.

But surely the sudden change ought to have furnished you with a new set of sentiments. — How could you withstand such palpable conviction of the insufficiency of youth, prosperity, and adulation, to preserve you from the hand of sickness, or the jaws of death. Notwithstanding this subject may not be so entertaining as many others, do not treat it with disgust or disregard; for none can exceed it in importance. You would most certainly have committed some gross error, to the destruction of your peace, if not your reputation, had you not been so happily prevented — and you ought to esteem all you have suffered, as the most fortunate of events.



events. Let me conjure you, my dear mistaken girl, to reap all the benefit the blessing is capable of. — Avoid every return to error, as you would a poisoned dart — accustom yourself to weigh and deliberate your future steps — and then, and then only, will your heart remain a stranger to repentance. But should you relapse upon the re-establishment of your health into your wonted giddy course — you will not only lose the most valuable of lovers — but become an object of general contempt. Perhaps my letter, if you do vouchsafe it a reading, may produce the same drowsy effects as the colonel's conversation : — but take my word for it, they are equally calculated to promote your real happiness. — Listen, therefore, for the time to come, with an ear of complacency to his honest rational proposals, and bestow a favourable eye upon my epistles. — We could, in a very short time, convince you, if you would but divest yourself of vain and absurd prejudices, that you have hitherto been merely grasping



grasping a shadow, and have most blameably neglected the substance.

Custom can reconcile us to evil — nor is its power less prevalent with respect to what is good. — Do not suffer so inestimable a gem as your excellent understanding, to be lost, or, at best, abused, in your possession. — If you are inclined to call in its assistance, it will enable you to live a life of reason ; but, useless as you render it at present, and seemingly inactive, be assured it will revive to add a poignance to the reproaches of conscience, and prove your greatest torment. I suppress the further dictates of my heart to prevent your being wearied, and will only renew this subject, at your own request (a pleasure I fear I shall not soon receive) or upon some new provocation — and I will only add, that your happiness is my happiness — nor can mortification or disappointment affect you, without my participation. You have ever loved me — can you then wound me in my tenderest

tenderest part? I could forgive, I could support your neglect of me; but I shall never be equal to your misfortunes.

I have been a wife a fortnight this day, and little did I imagine the unfavourable auspices under which my change of condition commenced: — but I am not naturally superstitious; and if I was, I could find no evil omen in your preservation. My father is happy in his son, and his son exults in the new relation he has acquired: — their dispositions are so exactly similar, and the desire of promoting each other's felicity, so reciprocal; that the disparity of their age is perfectly lost. You may conceive my feelings, as you are well acquainted with my tendernefs for both; nor do I apprehend any other interruption to our general satisfaction, than what we may derive from you. I mention that circumstance as a further stimulative to your looking about you, as I know you generous to an extreme; and that how-

the soft invitation — and so soon as I awakened I would let him know.

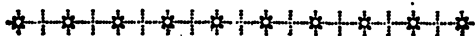
He was all obedience—pleasure glowed upon his cheek; and I dare believe that we were equally happy in our separate, as we had been in our united state: for my own part I acknowledge I never enjoyed a sweeter repose, and found myself quite a new creature. A ray of my former vivacity began to dawn upon my heart — that beat with unaccustomed vigour:—but observe, Mrs. Anne, I nevertheless continued the same harmless, passive creature as before—except, indeed, a sense of obligation, uncommon to my breast, that occasioned me some little agitation. I was so condescending as to remember the promise I had made my companion; —therefore sent for him so soon as I had recollected myself a few minutes, and composed my dress. — He made his appearance in a twink—received many handsome professions of my gratitude—for as I was convinced the rest

I had

I had experienced was owing chiefly to his conversation, I did not scruple to acknowledge it. My fine speeches had not however, the most elevating effect upon him: — I pitied his pride and stupidity; — for really, my dear, the man looked as if he either could not comprehend me — or was at a loss to determine whether I meant to compliment or affront him, by telling him that he had talked me to sleep.

I shall to-morrow dine in the parlour, and begin to breathe somewhat at large. — I have been all submission hitherto to all their prescriptions; — but I shall soon cast off the trammels, and judge for myself.

L E T.



L E T T E R XXV.

MISS NANCY PITTBOROUGH to MISS  
PITTBOROUGH.

I Tremble, my dearest girl, but to think of the danger you have escaped! — What then should I have felt had I been apprised of your labouring under it? As Providence has graciously spared you, my aunt's conduct cannot justly be condemned — but had you been lost to us for ever, what amends could she have made me, for depriving me of my share of necessary attendance, and taking a last farewell of one so tenderly beloved? I cannot forbear resuming my former employment, of endeavouring to open your eyes to some evils that again seem to threaten you; — it is a  
part

part of friendship not to be easily dispensed with. Your heart, my love, has by no means received either a due impression of the mercies you have experienced, or of the instability of human felicity. Is it not astonishing that, susceptible as you are in general, you should be callous here? — But no, your giddy imagination presents you with no other idea of what is past — than a common incident, as likely to have befallen any other person as yourself. — But, believe me, such judgments are highly erroneous : — if we are to consider ourselves as under the immediate protection and direction of an all-wise Power, — can we conceive that whatever seeming accidents reach us, have no further meaning in them, than merely affecting our corporeal part : — “ a  
 “ sparrow cannot fall to the ground without  
 “ the permission of its creator : ” — will we then deem ourselves of less value than they?

A visitation of the kind you have met with, could not be more essential for any  
 human

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You may remember the scheme I told you Mrs. Hutchens and I had formed.—That fatal scheme has ruined us both.—She perceived our views, was justly offended at them, and by an artifice we were too shallow to penetrate, produced the calamity I shall ever deplore.

Had we proceeded differently!—but she was not born for me.—I should have been too too happy.—Alas! the contrary extreme must now be my portion. Deceived and flattered by appearances, I thought myself secure, and overflowing with self-satisfaction; and big with self-consequence, I slipped away after dinner to quicken the attorney, whose slow progress with the deeds was become intolerable to me, as I considered them as the only impediment to our union.

Having received satisfactory assurances of dispatch, I took my leave—hummed a tune as I crossed Lincoln's-Inn—pitied

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every



every person I met for not being so happy as myself—and returned to Mrs. Hutchens' to conclude the day where I began it. But how was I disconcerted, on entering the dining-room, to find that wretched thing Sir Matthew fimping, and, as he evidently imagined, entertaining a woman so superior to himself, that I was astonished he could support the mortifying consciousness of the ridiculous attempt. Temper is not my greatest boast:—my head and heart were instantly in a flame—I was even mean in my repartees;—but Miss Pittborough was so cruel as to make him amends by her smiles for my acrimony.

I, however, outstayed him. Mrs. Hutchens severely rebuked her niece for her behaviour—and I boldly ventured to express my disapprobation.

Oh how lovely, how provoking she looked!—"It was mighty well!—she had indeed prepared herself for a lecture—"

MISS PITTBOROUGH. 195

“ ture—to be sure some strokes had ex-  
“ ceeded her worst expectations—but she  
“ could bear them all.—A very pretty  
“ figure she was sensible she must make;  
“ in suffering herself to be so roughly  
“ treated by a person who had not the  
“ least right to assume so daring a privi-  
“ lege:—but it was her aunt’s house;  
“ and she was pleased not only to give  
“ a sanction to such ill breeding, but  
“ visibly encouraged it;—and therefore  
“ she was content.”

“ For God’s sake, my dear madam,”  
said I, “ do not misconstrue the liberty  
“ I have taken with you.—I am the last  
“ person who would attempt to controul  
“ your inclinations.—I indeed could not  
“ behold your approbation of that wretch,  
“ without being stung to the soul;—and I  
“ did hope that the terms we were upon”—

“ What terms,” said she hastily,  
“ could either authorize or excuse such

“behaviour?—If I had really proceeded  
 “the lengths in your favour, you have  
 “so industriously endeavoured to precipitate me—must I have lived for you  
 “alone, without ever receiving or returning the smallest civility of the rest  
 “of your sex?—But you have happily  
 “shewn yourself in your proper colours—  
 “and I bless myself that I have escaped  
 “your narrow arbitrary power.”

Mrs. Hutchens was highly offended at this speech ;—accused her of ingratitude, unworthiness, and diabolical pride ;—advised me never to make her of any consequence for the future, for that she was undeserving of such a heart as she knew me to be master of.

Dear-bought compliment !—fatal officiousness !—instead of serving, she has irreparably undone us.

“And do you think, madam,” returned Miss Pittborough, her complexion greatly

greatly heightened, “ that I could ever  
 “ consent to marry a man, so every way  
 “ my superior? The obligations he has  
 “ conferred upon me would alone have  
 “ proved an insurmountable obstacle,—  
 “ as I really must acknowledge I have  
 “ too proud a heart to thank any one for  
 “ receiving my hand:—and since I am  
 “ urged to it, I must tell you, that, not-  
 “ withstanding Sir Matthew is not alto-  
 “ gether so slightly as that gentleman  
 “ (looking contemptuously upon me) I  
 “ would, and do, infinitely prefer him,  
 “ as he was equally affected at the ill-  
 “ ness I have so lately recovered, though  
 “ he has been too genteel to make a me-  
 “ rit of it.”

I would have behaved with my usual  
 servility—confessed myself to blame—in-  
 treated forgiveness—but Mrs. Hutchens  
 would not permit me. “ You may in-  
 “ deed, sir,” said she, “ thank yourself  
 “ in a great measure for my niece’s

“ haughty treatment of you.—You have  
“ fed her vanity until she fancies her  
“ self a goddess.—And yet,” added she  
smiling, “ she has no more delicacy or  
“ regard for her deityship than to her  
“ with a Vulcan.—But I insist upon it,  
continued she in a more serious accent  
“ that from henceforward she may act  
“ what part she pleases.—You will al-  
“ ways be a welcome visitor at my house  
“ but I will only consider you in the  
“ usual light of a friend,—as I hope you  
“ will in a very short time be able to be-  
“ hold the woman who has treated you  
“ so unworthily, with suitable indiffer-  
“ ence.—I cannot believe her so abusu-  
“ as really to have any favourable dispo-  
“ sition towards Sir Matthew ; but if she  
“ has, she will meet with the punish-  
“ ment due to her levity ; for I can tell  
“ upon me to say, that his mind is more  
“ deformed by ill-nature than his body  
“ by disease. With any other coxcomb  
“ I might be alarmed ; but here the dece-  
“ ti-

“ tion is so low, so obvious, that upon  
“ reflection I am angry with myself for  
“ not laughing at it, instead of being dis-  
“ turbed.”

This was the rock on which my happiness split:—out of absolute perverseness, she affected to approve what she would otherwise have despised:—but I will not abuse him.

She persisted in this conduct for a whole week, whilst I appeared awkwardly composed, and clumsily indifferent.—How little did I foresee the fatal termination!—I am again lost—a few moments recollection will enable me to proceed.

The eighth day after this disappointment of my hopes, having come to a resolution of renouncing my assumed neglect, and by every submission she could require, establish myself once more in her good opinion; I dropped in as usual

at Mrs. Hutchens's; for, notwithstanding Miss Pittborough's brow had, during that tedious interval, continued ever unfavourable, I was unable to live without the sight of her.

I perceived a wildness in the fellow's looks that opened the door; but my heart was too full of the work I wished to accomplish, to suffer me to attend to any thing that did not immediately relate to Miss Pittborough. Kitty instantly made her appearance: an air of triumph and malicious satisfaction was visible in her countenance.

“ My cousin is gone out, fir,” said she; “ and I fancy we shall see no more  
“ of her for this day.”—“ Your mamma,  
“ I suppose, is with her,” I would have added :—but she interrupted me with saying, “ I am at present quite mistress of the  
“ house, therefore cannot expect to be  
“ favoured with much of your good company.”

“pany.” Unfeeling, callous wretch! Thus was I deluded out of a whole day,—and that sweet amiable creature fell a sacrifice. I passed a miserable afternoon and restless night,—from my impatience to shake off a practice I was become unspeakably weary of.—I formed a thousand speeches to excuse my behaviour; addressed them to her in idea a thousand and a thousand times; and from the soft flattery that at length stole upon my heart, of finding her propitious, I dropped into a sleep, at an hour when I should have been upon the wing:—but it is over, and I must never see her more.

The next morning, however, revealed all the horror of my circumstances.

“I will follow her, madam,” cried I in a kind of frenzy to good Mrs. Hutchens, “and either recover her, or perish in the attempt.—She has only taken this step to rouse me from my seeming lethargy:—



“ thargy :—she is justifiable in her proceedings :—she is properly conscious of her worth,—and has too great a mind to pardon indignities unsolicited. “ Do not attempt to detain me,” (she was for proposing some other person, as best capable of the pursuit) “ my life, “ my soul, depends upon my success;— “ and I shall be outrageous, if opposed “ in this my positive determination.”

I need not tell you the expedition I used in my journey ;—but she had a whole day’s advantage of me, and was beyond my reach. What bitter imprecations did I now utter against myself and the hard-natured Kitty,—and the next moment prayed as heartily for forgiveness !—In this state of mind I reached Edinburgh.

I had traced her all the way from inn to inn,—and drove the last stage in tortures not to be described. I jumped from the carriage the instant it stopped,—  
and

and violently seizing the first man I saw, asked if such a person (imperfectly describing her) was not in the house. He told me she was, and with great civility conducted me to the apartment Sir Matthew had made use of.

My heart—I could scarce contain it—I abruptly broke into the room,—and found her alone, pale and pensive. She started, and arose.—I caught her in my arms,—and pressing her to my bosom, cried in distracted sentences—“ Pardon, “ pardon !—you shall—you must be only “ mine.”

“ Oh fir,” said she, in a voice that pierced my very soul, and half fainting at the same time—“ You are come too “ late.—I have already disposed of my- “ self,—and have not another hand to “ bestow.”—At this instant—the wretch Sir Matthew stalked into the room. She died away,—whilst he, disregarding her

her condition, looked sternly upon me, demanding what business I had there ;—adding, “ That lady is my wife.”

That cruel insult drove me to distraction.—I snatched up a pistol—“ Unfeeling monster ! to triumph over misery that you yourself have occasioned.”—

Miss Pittborough opened her lovely eyes.—“ My husband !” was all she could utter.—I felt their meaning,—and down dropped the weapon prepared for destruction upon the floor, and happily discharged itself without any mischief.

Sir Matthew offered his arm to the drooping victim.—“ You had better leave this apartment ; that madman will only discompose you.”

“ You are protected, sir,” returned I. “ Mortally wounded as I am,—I seek no satisfaction,—convinced of the impossibility of obtaining it.”

I en-

I endeavoured to rise,—but found my limbs unable to support me.—He dragged the dearest object from my sight—more dead than alive—and left—oh he left me—but you can have no idea of it.

I charge you, Ned, as you regard my peace or reason, never to tear open this wound afresh by attempting consolation.—I am not to be consoled.—There was but one circumstance that could in any degree have alleviated so crushing an evil.—Had she the least prospect of happiness,—that would have been a support;—but she is no less undone than myself, and death alone——

But do not be alarmed.—I am not so hardened as to commit a deliberate suicide.—I survived a moment—I saw her torn from me,—reluctance and horror in her countenance.—I was then preserved from guilt, and you have nothing now to fear.

Take

Take notice, however, that I will quit this country on some desperate enterprize; and should a bullet in mercy find its way to my heart,—though under the directing hand of my most mortal enemy,—I will thank him with my latest breath,—as it is the only means that can restore me to rest and peace.



### L E T T E R   XXXIII.

Lady SANXSEY to Miss NANCY PITT-  
BOROUGH.

**N**OW, my dear sister, I have some reason to hope, that the measure of my punishment is complete,—and that futurity cannot have such another shock in store for me, as I yesterday experienced.

O I will tell you all, and, when once my miserable bosom has relieved itself, by  
a com-

a communication of its sorrow, I will endeavour to bring good out of evil, and rest satisfied with my fate.

Preposterous promise!—delusive expectation!—never, never again will the cup of satisfaction reach my lips.—What happy days have I not enjoyed! Neither sickness (except in a late disregarded instance) nor disappointment found the way to my habitation. But that exemption from corporeal suffering rendered my mind diseased, far beyond the possibility of cure.—Not the strongest and most valuable admonitions of friendship,—nor the most pathetic persuasions of love, could save my soul from the mortal pangs it now endures.

Just turned nineteen, and lost to every felicity!—But I have carved my own fortune;—would to God I could likewise digest it!

I re-

I remember our parting well.—You, my dear, had some singular forebodings of my evil destiny.—How did you intreat me not to suffer pleasure to intoxicate my reason, nor to promise myself I could gather roses, insensible of the thorn ?

I, giddily secure, laughed equally at your tender apprehensions, and prudent advice; and impatiently wished for the arrival of my aunt's carriage, to deliver me from a repetition of the same heavy, dull lecture.

It did arrive;—my heart was divided between the transport of emerging from obscurity, and the reluctance to be separated from you.—Tears, however, involuntarily escaped me.—We drove from the door;—how little did I then imagine I was driving to destruction !

My aunt, with great good humour, rallied me upon the softness of my nature,  
telling

ever prodigal you might be inclined to be, respecting your own store, you would be a miser of another's property.



L E T T E R XXVI.

Colonel DINGLEY to Mr. BROOKSBANK.

**Y**OU complain of neglect—why faith, Ned, I beg your pardon ; but my hours are at present so agreeably taken up, that I have scarcely one to throw away upon any occasion. But don't let it affect you, my boy ; for in every other respect I am as much yours as ever.

I am above half inclined to flatter myself that my difficulties are at an end ; this amiable woman is, in every particular, so very propitious.—I have free leave to pursue

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the



the dictates of my heart — prattle without interruption or restraint, and a fair prospect of prevailing upon her to be mine, before she can receive any other contamination. Her vivacity, indeed, is so far recovered, that I could answer for the consequence if she were to get loose in her single state—she certainly is not accountable to any one for her actions — and she is not of a disposition to submit to impertinent controul. But once her fate was united to mine, I was convinced that the gentlest persuasion would be sufficient to preserve her from irregularities ; my authority, as I must should never presume upon it, would add the greater weight with her, and her docility would effect more than a thousand arguments. How can I be surprised at lengths her vivacity transports her, and even my sedateness is but a poor security for me, when exalted by her approbation with her it is a constitutional, with only an occasional animation. The stre-

of it, therefore, must be extreme, and the merit of having it under due regulation, unspeakable. She is at present exempt from every care : — no demands upon her tenderness — no demands upon her prudence — no demands upon her condescension. But when once initiated into the amiable characters of the wife and mother, she would find full exertion for them all. O Ned ! Can you have forgotten the description I gave you of her when at the play ? Has she not lovely sensibility ? — Did not her tears, judiciously bestowed, bear testimony of the goodness of her disposition ? The innocent distress of the children — the heart-rending sorrow of the parent — did they not suitably affect her ? — Ah, she felt it all ! — and hiding her face to conceal the beautiful effects of her humanity, made me wholly her's. Mrs. Hutchens and I have formed a plot upon her excellent niece : — her sentiments and mine perfectly correspond — she will see but little company — she will give into but few

parties, until I have obtained the present of her hand. — The bustle of preparations, it is hoped, will prove sufficient amusement ; — and I'll venture to trust her with her own conduct afterwards. As to you, Mr. Edward, I expect your presence upon the occasion, with every essential to do your friend honour : — no excuses you can offer will be accepted : — your mistress's constancy cannot be suspected — and your separation, for a short period, will but tend to augment the happiness of your future interviews.

LET-



LETTER XXVII.

MISS PITTBOROUGH to MISS NANCY  
PITTBOROUGH.

**H**OW unfortunate, my dear sister, that your very instructive, your valuable epistle should reach me in such an hour of gaiety, as to answer no other purpose than to make you appear to my imagination as a mere Hottentot.

And so you would seriously persuade me that I am restored to health for no other purpose than, as a proof of my gratitude, &c. &c. to become as gloomy and sanctified as yourself?

Notwithstanding all the suspicions you so wisely and civilly entertain of the un-

soundness of my heart, give me leave to tell your matronly ladyship, that I am no more capable of rendering myself a similar being to you, with respect to outward appearance, than it is possible for you to exchange your disposition for such a one as mine; and yet I am bold to affirm that I have a due sense of the blessing I have recovered; and, as a proof of my setting a just value upon it, I mean to enjoy it to the utmost.

My good discreet aunt, and the sober designing colonel, I find have united forces in order to matronize me, thereby hoping to clip the wings of my vivacity, and qualify me for the domestic hop. — What obligations do I not owe them for their kind intentions? though I cannot entirely subscribe to the admirable measures they seem disposed to pursue.

And is liberty then so light a consideration with them and you, as to be sacrificed  
to

to such narrow views, as making a pudding? — How I condemn your little mindness! — No, it is the soul of happiness, and shall not expire unfairly.

You are really a very pretty advocate for the matrimonial cause. — My father is turned threescore. — “ Well, says you, I am so “ happy, it is impossible for me to describe “ how happy I am. — My husband and father are so much alike, that bating a few “ wrinkles, you might mistake the one for “ the other.” A most amazing satisfaction, upon my word, to so young a woman! — But now your elderly appearing gentlemen would by no means suit me: — I am for an animated, not an inanimate being — one who could fly, not hobble, to protect me in case of danger — who could be learned with the learned — amusing with the gay — a handsome figure in every person’s estimation — and master of an arm, so well strung, as to be able to break my bones

upon fuitable provocation. Still life ! can it have any charms ?

“ My dear, I am quite of your opinion.”  
 “ Ah, my love, I knew thou wouldst ; for  
 “ we never disagree.”

How fulsome — how odious !—

“ Madam, I insist upon your compli-  
 “ ance.”

“ Sir, you mistake, your power is not  
 “ altogether so absolute.”

“ Madam, I would advise you not to  
 “ be too provoking.”

“ Oh, sir ! so well bred a gentleman  
 “ can never forget the treatment due to a  
 “ lady.”

“ But, madam, if you are pleased to  
 “ act inconsistent with your character,  
 “ you

“ you ought not to be surpris'd if I deviate  
“ from mine.”

“ Yes, sir, my surprise would be un-  
“ speakable, as I am only a weak frail  
“ woman, you one of the lords of the  
“ creation.”

There's the life of living for you ! have  
you any thing in your humdrums that can  
come in competition with it ?

But, to be serious, I must acknowledge  
that this colonel possesses a most extrava-  
gant share of my good opinion : — his ten-  
derness, his complaisance, are not without  
their beauties : — but a husband, my dear,  
is so preposterous a being — so like the  
giant, with his seven-leagu'd boots, that  
our nursery maid us'd to tell us of, that I  
own I am terrified at the bare idea of such  
a huge mortal falling to my lot. Then you  
must have no eyes, nor ears, but for this  
master of your fate : — you must never  
be



be weary of listening to his nauseous tales; wherein he, the hero, has performed such wonderful achievements as requires your whole stock of credulity to believe only the third part: — you must model your person, both dress and address, to his pretty fancy, and twenty to one but his grandmother's poke — may enjoy a larger share of his approbation, than his mother's pinners: — you must conform to his hours — yawn when he yawns — retire when he retires, or perhaps barely escape suffocation, by sitting a whole evening under a cloud of his raising. — Oh, I could never endure it!

Or, in all probability, as the man chosen for me is a soldier, he would have the modesty to request me to turn campaigner: — so loving, how could one refuse? To be sure the inconvenience of travelling, and the hardy accommodations of a tent — the hazard of being surprised by the enemy into a state of captivity, or having a bullet  
dispatch

## MISS PITTBOROUGH. 171

dispatch one in one's sleep, are circumstances by no means inviting : — but then our fond husband cannot bear a separation ; and our hearts are too tender to deny them any thing.

Perhaps the several officers belonging to the corps, when no immediate danger was apprehended, might be permitted to spend the evening with their colonel and his lady : — the honour how great to them — the happiness how extreme to us : — a relaxation from their fatigue — a cordial to their commander's spirits — who cracks his bottle and his joke with equal humour.

They have their jest, in return, a little tawdry or so ; — but who could restrain them, when, in all probability, they might have but few days to live ?

Oaths are shocking to ears that are not properly seasoned ; — but if a man could not tell his story (a good one too in every other

other respect) without such embellishments — why you know — it would be cruel to deprive him of his satisfaction, or one's-self of the best entertainment a camp could afford. The signal is given for engaging: — the parting is very pathetic. — I weep! — he sighs! — but must tear himself from me. The guns rattle in my ears — I am ready to die with apprehension: — but soon after, my husband returns victorious, with only the loss of his thumb: — the sight of blood is more than I can support: — I faint; — my hero laughs: — the wound is dressed, and we return to our native country.

A knighthip is the consequence of this noble enterprize. — I shared the fatigue — and now share the glory likewise. — “Your ladyship!” — What a desperate pretty sound — especially as it was obtained only by my husband's depriving a few miserable wretches of their lives, at the immense small hazard of his own. Wherever I go  
I am

I am perfectly idolized. — “Your ladyship must have seen a vast deal of the world.”

“O madam! bloody scenes have but little to amuse.”

“O dear, your ladyship! — I wonder you did not die upon the spot.”

His knightship is promised a handsome post as the reward of his valour: — but a peace ensues — the ministry is changed — and he finds himself sunk into oblivion. He exalts his voice wheresoever he comes: — fights his battles over and over again — whilst I give the confirming Yes to all that he is pleased to relate. His efforts, however, prove ineffectual: — his country wants his service no longer: — and who remembers what is past? — He has the mortification to see his head taken down from every petty ale-house — for the more important purpose of doing honour to the member

member of a neighbouring county ; — or, perhaps, only replacing a new painted grinning Saracen. — He, in short, has nothing for it, but to fly to his patrimony in Wiltshire — teach his children to avoid public spiritedness, if they would avoid ill-treatment and disappointment — and herd with every thick-headed squire within fifty miles round.

I, his spouse, have by this time passed my meridian — collect a string of useful receipts — make posset drinks — prepare felves, &c. &c. — I have enough upon my hands : — my husband soured by neglect himself — neglects me also — except when returns of the gout make him sensible I am one degree better than common lumber. — He is, at length, taken off by an uncommonly severe attack — and does not leave me one six-pence more than my jointure ; — and, having educated his heir (my eldest cub) agreeable to his own taste and principles, he even thinks that too much for me.

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me. — Thus, Nancy, I who now (however qualified by nature) shine in the box, and sparkle at the ball — by a too early sacrifice of my liberty, and adherence to a set of formal romantic notions of dutifulness, lovingness, &c. &c. — should pass my days without enjoyment — die in obscurity — unpitied, unlamented, by even the very beings I had given life to. — If you can expect me to fall in love with such a piece, you are by no means the girl I take you for : — but, alas ! that appellation no longer suits you, and I know not what judgment to form of you in other particulars.


LET-



## L E T T E R XXVIII.

From the same, to the same.

I Foresee a rupture of no small consequence is at hand: — my aunt bears all before her—the jeweller—the mercer—the millener, &c. &c. are successively rapping at the door the whole morning long. — We are denied to every one, my old admirer, fir Matthew, in particular: — sufficient this conduct to rouse the spirit of a meeker woman than myself. — But I have still a further, nay an irresistible stimulative: — for Miss Kitty, (I am infinitely obliged to her upon this occasion, however) by revealing the train of their measures to her favourite Abigail, in a  
private



private tête-à-tête (when I was supposed to be at too great a distance to reap any benefit) has enabled me to counterwork them in every mean particular.

What! is it then judged necessary to confine me to a dark room, in order to succeed in their darker purposes? But I will burst out when they least expect it. If I express an inclination to go any where, the answer is, “ My dear, you are yet  
 “ too weak to bear much fatigue—we  
 “ will make a little party at home.—  
 “ Kitty, indeed, is engaged; but the  
 “ colonel and Mrs. Hobbes (a woman  
 “ only ten years older than herself) will  
 “ complete a set.”—So down we sit shuffling and cutting—now the cards—and now a harmless joke—until the noisy hall-clock distinctly deals us out ten sober strokes,—when I am hurried to my apartment, as if my very fate was hinged upon that single period.



I ever promised myself I would at least renounce my virgin state with all possible eclat;—but, instead of fulfilling that promise, if I do not speedily exert myself, I shall be huddled into a wife—and there's an end of me.

I cannot but be highly diverted at the surprize I shall occasion them.—My aunt will piously lift up her hands—the colonel, blefs us! how he will rave—and the sullen Kitty perhaps once more attempt to be smart. 'Tis pity, though, to disappoint all their flattering expectations.—I am so very good-natured, easy, and all that, that I could almost find in my heart to become the dupe of their clumsy artifice, rather than give them pain.—But then I recollect that such passiveness would but ill-suit the martial character of my future husband; therefore re-confirm my resolution of running resty.

How

How shall I break the ice?—Suppose—no, that will never do;—I must not overshoot myself, or I shall indeed give them the advantage, and prepare a heavy penance for myself.

I will only intimate to the porter some ensuing day (slipping a trifle at the same time into his hand) that my aunt no longer requires him to deny her to common visitants, as I am now too well recovered to be affected by it. I know the old lady's whimsical notions too well to apprehend being betrayed to the fellow; for whatever displeasure she may please to let fall upon my devoted head, she would rather die than expose the folly and infirmities of her family to her servants.

How transporting the thought!—The colonel and I are tête-à-tête (for this good gentlewoman has not forgotten the days of her youth, and does now by us, as she would have wished at that period

to have been done by, most kindly withdrawing to her closet soon after the cloth is removed.) Well, as I was saying, we are tête-à-tête—the same tale on his part, the usual attention on mine.—A loud rap at the door—no matter, the porter has orders to admit no company—when in hobbles most unexpectedly my old galand.

I, as if deriving new life from his presence, give him the kindest of receptions;—then, smiling, accuse him of neglect, in not waiting upon me sooner—protesting him the man on earth I most wished to see. He, kissing my hand, justifies his own innocence, convinces me, from an immoderate catalogue of circumstances, that not a day passed without his fighting at my door,—with many pretty, pleasing, genteel intimations of all he suffered for my sake.

I all gratitude—he all love—forget that any one is present but ourselves—until,  
in

in conducting me to a chair, we stumble against the poor petrified colonel, who is so apparently chagrined, confounded, mortified, and astonished, that we are terrified at his countenance. I recommend the breathing of a vein, as the best relief for a sudden stupor, or fit of insensibility—when the passionate creature—no longer able to contain himself—with a wild look, and threatening voice, vows never to see me more—and immediately bursts out of the apartment.

We laugh aloud, in order to increase his fury—sit down to piquet—and have got through three cool pleasant games, before my aunt, with her high-swelled features, vouchsafes to join us. She casts many bitter and reproachful glances at me.—I shrug my shoulders, as a token of my ignorance of her meaning:—she sits the baronet out, (though seated upon thorns) — when she pours forth so tremendous a lecture, that I either am (or

affect to be) miserably shocked—(can severity suit with delicacy?)—complain of faintness—and am for hurrying to my apartment.

But she, apprehensive of some bad consequence, prevents my design; and, relaxing her features, softening her accent, and presenting me with a few decent speeches, soothes me not only into composure, but prevails upon me to pardon her. The colonel too is considered as a first-rate offender—but by the good lady's intercession, and a profusion of acknowledgments and concessions on his part, is once more restored to favour—and so the frolic ends.

The matrimonial preparations are suspended, as they are apprehensive of teasing me, if they introduce the subject too soon—by which means I disentangle myself from their snares,—and if I am ever so far caught again—why set me  
down

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down for any thing,—every thing,—but  
a woman of spirit.



L E T T E R XXIX.

MISS HUTCHENS to MISS NANCY PITT-  
BOROUGH.

**I** AM sorry, my dear cousin, to dis-  
turb your present felicity with such  
disagreeable news as I have to communi-  
cate;—but, as Mamma says, you must  
know it—and therefore the sooner the  
better.

Indeed I was always concerned to see  
the intolerable lightness of my cousin's  
behaviour, though I was far from suspect-  
ing what it would produce.—O how I  
have heard her disclaim for an hour toge-

ther upon the beauty of honour, and the felicity of a conduct that merited no reproach ;—but they were not the sentiments of her heart, it is pretty plain, or she would never have permitted her wedding-cloaths to be made for one occasion, and idly embraced another.

And such a man too it is she has slighted,—that half the ladies have been pulling caps for ! I think I may venture to say, she did not know what she would have,—and dearly perhaps repents by this time ;—but her pride will never suffer her to acknowledge it.

No other man would have borne the treatment the colonel has received from her ;—but he would believe it was all harmless giddiness, and that matrimony would perfectly reclaim her :—I am mistaken, but it does with a witness. She went off but this very morning : we suspect sir Matthew is the companion of her flight,

flight, but are far from being at any certainty :—but you shall hear from us again so soon as we are able to obtain some satisfactory information. I think 'tis pity she ever came to London : she might, perhaps, have avoided every error under my uncle's observation and protection ;—but she was so set up in this place with the idle homage her person (from being new) procured her, that it is no wonder her head was at last affected.—Make proper tenders of my duty and respects, and believe me to be upon this occasion most sincerely concerned for your uneasiness, as

I am, &c.

LET-





LETTER XXX.

Miss NANCY PITTBOROUGH to Mrs.  
HUTCHENS.

**D**EAR madam, I intreat you will explain by the very return of the post, what misfortune has befallen my poor mistaken sister. How could Miss Kitty be so little sensible of our affection for the dear fugitive, as to intermix the most cruel reflections with a piece of intelligence that has wrung all our hearts?

My sister (unhappy though she may be) possessed many valuable perfections, at least she had a nature soft and open to distress. — Had Miss Kitty erred, she would generously have extenuated (not maliciously

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bully aggravated) the matter; and from feeling herself, would not have wounded her friends so mercilessly. Never let her write again : her language is the language of the envious and malevolent.

Excuse me, my dear aunt ; I have all the respect for you that your goodness demands ;—but I cannot tolerate the pert and illiberal, let them be whomsoever they may.

Pity our distress, forgive my petulance, for never mother loved a child with more tenderness or partiality than I my sister.—Restore her to us, if possible, single ; let her not become a prey to some insinuating wretch, who must have strangely misled her.

Write, write, my good madam, by the first opportunity. I cannot leave my father, or I myself would endeavour to recover her ; she is a jewel of inestimable value,

value, notwithstanding a single flaw, which cannot be overlooked.



## L E T T E R   X X X I .

Lady SANXSEY to Miss NANCY PITT-  
BOROUGH.

**W**HAT have I done? Oh my sister, my folly, pride, and ingratitude, have at last planted daggers in my breast, and I fear the breasts of my friends likewise.

But it is past, irrecoverably past, and I will endeavour to make the only atonement in my power,—bearing the bitter consequence with tolerable patience and resolution.—Resolution! what a dreadful sound! I have deprived myself of the only man on earth I ever could love—  
thrown away my person and happiness  
upon

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upon one I hate—and then talk of resolution. But I will be composed ; I might have taken a worse step.—Sir Matthew is not so despicable as I have depicted him.—He is barely turned of forty ; but having lived pretty freely, and being naturally near-sighted, he is by no means an eligible figure.

Oh misery ! the colonel was—but the conflict is over, and he must no longer be master of my heart.

Sir Matthew's estate is very considerable, and I do believe he is a man of honour. He has promised me a handsome settlement so soon as I am of age ;—but can he heal—Yet why accuse him ? I only was to blame.—I almost proposed the elopement myself—merely for the pleasure of being pursued ; but my punishment is just, and I will not repine. Heavens ! what will become of me ? how shall I bear the inevitable, the killing effects of  
the

the connection I have entered into?—Sir Matthew my husband!—I cannot survive the thought!—but it will not, cannot be dissolved,—and death alone has power to release me.

That I had but the bosom of friendship to repose myself upon, though but for a short period!—I might perhaps recover my reason—become capable of recollection—and at length resigned.

Sir Matthew has it in his own breast at this juncture either to fix my esteem or eternal disgust, by the use he makes of the authority I have invested him with.—If he compels me to live with him in my present disposition of mind, he is a monster, and I shall—but I am at his mercy, and must abide by every horrid consequence. Adieu, my dearest sister; my only consolation is, that you have secured your happiness by your prudence, and I can only lament my not having followed so worthy an example.

LET-



L E T T E R   X X X I L

Colonel DINGLEY to Mr. BROOKSBANK.

**H**OW little do we know of ourselves, or what we are, or are not capable of enduring in this life!—I that was for dying if Miss Pittborough was not restored to me, have been enabled to survive a more terrible misfortune.

O Ned, I have indeed lost her, lost the woman I loved better than my own soul; yet I am neither sunk to the grave, nor are my senses in the least impaired. She has dealt cruelly by me,—yet may every good angel protect her, and soften the misery I have too much reason to apprehend she has prepared for herself!

She

She did not hate me ;—her eyes have spoke the contrary a thousand times :—yet she has torn herself from me for ever, —and given a mortal wound to my everlasting peace.

I wish I could be sufficiently master of myself to give you an account of the horrid affair ;—but I am unequal to it at present :—tenderness and resentment rend me in pieces. —I must rave.

\* \* \* \*

It is not a subject that can ever be handled coolly ; years and years must pass before that period arrives. — So lovely, so encouraging, so seemingly sincere !—so near the summit of all I wished !—What a desperate shock must I not have received ?—But Kitty, Kitty caused my destruction ; — and may I never behold her more, and I will endeavour not to curse her too bitterly.

You

telling me, that our friendship had but few precedents in the world, to which she was about to introduce me, to keep it in countenance ;—and shall I confess, that, notwithstanding I was sensible she in reality highly approved the scene she had been witness to, I was more than half ashamed, that I had betrayed so much of the rustic in her presence, determining for the future to assume a less susceptible character, in order to qualify myself for fashionable circles.

I adhered with a fatal steadiness to this worthy resolution ; and, except that now and then the genuine dictates of my nature were too powerful for restraint, I might be said to be a few removes only from insensibility.

You know what ensued.—My weak imagination, dazzled by gay trappings and splendid gewgaws, and my brain heated by the rich draughts of flattery I imbibed,



left me doubtful of my mortality. What exultation,—what delight did I not receive from paining a worthy heart!—But the work is at length accomplished, and a glorious work it proves!—Nor can I support——Well, well, they say calamities may be lightened by being judiciously borne,—and the part I have already acted leaves no doubt of my discretion upon every occasion.

Had the colonel but understood the art of dissimulation—had he not, with a frankness and generosity almost peculiar to himself, put his heart into my hands,—I should not so wantonly have undone either him or myself!—He conceived ideas of my principles that were utterly erroneous.—I have indeed proved myself an angel—but it is an angel of darkness!

I loved—tenderly, sincerely loved him,—but could not resist the temptation of exercising my power—and I apprehended that

that the bare confession of the sentiments he had inspired me with, though to the dearest friend on earth, would be a diminution of that power.—It was my intention, my desire to be his at the long-run ;—but so fine a creature, truly, was not to be obtained in a common way. O vanity !—vanity !—thou art in general only deemed an infirmity, but in my breast hast proved a most pernicious vice !

So recently recovered from a most alarming distemper !—such incontestible, such engaging proofs as I was every hour receiving of the colonel's valuable attachment !—But I was superior to them all,—my offended pride required satisfaction—I scorned to be entrapped, though the snare had every charm to flatter my inclination,—and one frolic more I was bent upon carrying into execution,—and you are but too sensible how dearly that last frolic has been purchased.

My aunt's incredulity, and the colonel's seeming acquiescence with her opinion, were the grand stimulatives.—Sir Matthew I judged a proper tool for my purpose,—and the conversations between Kitty and her maid, which I could now almost suspect were designed for my too busy ear, contributed in a very great degree to drive me to the extremity.

Sir Matthew, equally vain, and equally mis-judging with myself, was elated with my preference of him,—and a journey to Scotland tickled his fancy (though from different motives) in a similar degree to mine.

How did I please myself the three first stages with anticipating the triumph I had prepared for myself!—I composed several very long and very absurd speeches for the occasion,—and believed each carriage I heard was my pursuers.

Sir

Sir Matthew's conversation, though extremely brilliant, was by no means the object of my attention :—I had other game in view,—and I still continued to support myself with the confident hope, that we should soon be overtaken.

My spirits, however, began to fail me the second day.—I contrived twenty little unnecessary delays,—but they were intirely disregarded ;—and it was but too visible that Sir Matthew was capable of acting a negligent as well as a submissive character.—Our cruel expedition was far from receiving any check, until we reached the end of our journey.

My heart sunk within me as I alighted.—How did I cast my eyes now on this side, now on that !—how did I not despise my own folly and precipitation !—when suddenly my pride returned to my aid.—“ What, and was I not worth the fol-  
“ lowing ?—But they shall repent their

“light estimation of me.—Do they imagine I will voluntarily return—intreat forgiveness—make the colonel one of my best curtsies for accepting my hand?  
“—No, I will die first;—and whatever were my intentions when I first set out, I have now sufficient provocation to dispose of myself, and I will be this man’s wife?”

Sir Matthew left me a few moments to my own reflections—What a conflict!—But resentment was predominant—I became impatient for the performance of the ceremony, which was hurried over at Sir Matthew’s return, and I rendered the most miserable woman breathing!

I begged Sir Matthew would give me leave to retire and acquaint my friends with the step I had taken.—He, affecting great politeness, complied with my request, and went, as I afterwards learned, to view the town during my being employed;—

ployed ;—and I had leisure not only to dispatch my last letter, but to indulge the most killing reflections.

I had determined, however, to preserve the appearance at least of resignation, and was sitting—like Patience on a monument smiling at grief—when I was surprised by a great noise at the door ;—and before I had either power to rise, or any degree of recollection, who should rush into my presence but the injured colonel, in an agony much better to be conceived than described. He seized me as his own—his words were scarcely articulate—but yet sufficiently intelligent.—I had but just time to reply, and was endeavouring to disengage myself from his arms, when Sir Matthew returned.—The contrast completed my wretchedness ;—my chosen, my intended—my real and abhorred husband at once before my eyes ;—but I was not long in a condition to make comparisons.

My insensibility continued but for a moment.—Providence was so gracious as to restore my reason, though not my utterance, except for three words only, or murder had been the consequence of my folly. A brace of pistols lay upon the slab—I suppose Sir Matthew was indiscreet—the colonel distracted—and the former owes his life to a single exclamation I made in his favour.

I will not recollect the rest.—I suffered myself to lose sight of all I held dear,—and my affliction was greatly increased by being rather ridiculed than pitied.

But be that day for ever blotted from my remembrance!—Sir Matthew, upon the whole, treats me much better than I deserve, and his future kindness will undoubtedly depend upon my good behaviour.

Thus, Nancy, am I reduced from commanding to submission;—and, instead of  
having

having my every inclination gratified almost before I could communicate it, I am under the mortifying necessity of sacrificing my will to that of another,—and that other——

Farewel, my sister, I am not so miserable as I have described:—do not therefore let your happiness be clouded or interrupted on my account.—Write to the colonel—give him every possible consolation—and, if I cannot assure you of my felicity, you may depend upon my being perfectly resigned.

LET-





## LETTER XXXIV.

Miss NANCY PITTBOROUGH to Lady  
SANSSEY.

**W**HAT shall I say to my beloved,  
my unfortunate sister, under her  
present circumstances?—How convey con-  
solation clear of reflection, or convince  
her that my pity, my sympathy, are hers,  
without adding fresh stings to her affliction?

Alas, my dear, it was but too necessary  
for you to learn the lesson of mortification;  
—that path is very slippery that is strewed  
with flowers.—A greater evil might have  
befallen you; your honour, your fortune  
is secure—but your task, I grant you, is  
rather hard to perform. Consider the  
{ sacred engagement you have entered into,  
and

and that whatever were your motives, nothing can excuse your fulfilling it. Do not suffer your thoughts to dwell upon improper objects, but at all times accustom yourself to turn them upon the most favourable side of your husband's character. —Cultivate, and by your approbation do justice to his real perfections, —and as tenderly compassionate and conceal his infirmities, remembering that they are merely the characteristics of mortality.

As to the world, it will soon forget the step you have taken ; your fortune and title will secure you from censure. —Error and a coach and six must be incompatible.

You have not forfeited the friendship of any one, —and you have it more than ever in your power to obtain an approbation you have hitherto been a stranger to, —I mean the approbation of your own heart.

My father conjures you to be mindful of the character you have thought proper

to assume, as you must hereafter expect to stand or fall in his affection, by that test of your prudence, resolution, and repentance.

He knows you to be capable of many great and good actions, and he has too much candour to conclude even in general (and too much partiality in this particular instance) that one false step can never be retrieved.

Your own understanding, assisted by cool reflection, will enable you to form a very different judgment of life, its pleasures and disappointments, than you have hitherto entertained. — You will be taught, nay convinced, that misfortunes depend in great measure upon ourselves, — as our imagination may constitute, or our reason diminish, more than half the grievance.

You will find, likewise, that every person you have connexion with (however

ver seemingly blessed) have their secret anxieties, and that yours perhaps, notwithstanding their present acuteness, are infinitely inferior to many.

The hand of death has probably robbed one of all he held dear ;—some severe chronical disease deprives another of all possibility of enjoyment ;—a third labours under those mortifications derived from the perverseness and undutifulness of an only child ;—a fourth is sunk down by the compunction of an evil conscience, — his friend died by his hand ;—a fifth—but it is madness to attempt enumerating the evils mankind are subject to,—and you will be satisfied that devoting your attention to one man, agreeable to your duty, and reducing your approbation for another into the sober sentiments of friendship, is by no means so formidable a difficulty in practice as in prospect.

As to your request of writing to the person whose welfare you have so much at heart,

heart, I am far from being clear with respect to the propriety of it; but I will bestow suitable consideration thereon, provided you promise me never to enquire either into the effects or certainty of my compliance;—the subject is abundantly too tender even to be touched upon at present;—a year or two hence perhaps may render you equal to it.

On every proper occasion my best services shall be yours,—and, if I cannot mitigate, I shall ever sympathize in your misfortunes.

END of the FIRST VOLUME.

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